

‘BEGGAR MY NEIGHBOUR

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BEGGAR MY NEIGHBOUR

**by
LIONEL FIELDEN**

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TO ZULFAQAR

My dear Zulfaqar,

For fifty months we have worked together in India, and for another thirty, through the blitzes and broadcasts and bafflements of London, we have talked and argued almost incessantly about the problems of your country and mine. We have almost always differed about everything, sometimes violently, but neither work nor argument has for an instant clouded a friendship more delightful and enduring than any I have known.

This book must be for you, because it is no more than my solitary continuation of our talks since you went back to India. Slapdash, therefore, it well may be, and you'd disagree with lots of it. Some day, perhaps, when communications are swift again, you'll write me an acid postscript for it: meanwhile, if it manages to pierce the Indian cloud with even the faintest flicker of lightning, it will have served its purpose.

Yours among the European barbarians,

LIONEL FIELDEN.

December, 1942

FRONTISPIECE

Outside, the white sun beat fiercely on high-pillared portico and sweeping marble steps, at the foot of which the landaus waited. The horses, sweating, flicked their tails against the flies, but the long lines of the bodyguard in their uniforms of blue and silver were stiff as statues, eyes in bronzed bearded faces fixed unseeingly on the dazzling glitter of the great empty forecourt. The two approaches drooped voidly away between their red walls, rising again to the maze of wrought-iron gates in the middle distance. Beyond, the fussy domes of the Secretariats rose against the sea of blue jacaranda bloom powdering the landscape and pierced here and there by dome or minaret. Over the marble steps a red carpet lolled like a parched tongue, stretching from entrance to carriage-door.

Inside, the Viceroy, adjusting his cockaded hat in front of a mirror, muttered at his reflection. "Absurd! Quite, quite absurd!" The Vicereine, a resplendent figure, lingeringly descended the grand staircase, glancing upwards at the painted ceiling, and feeling that each step clung to her feet, that with each step the power and the glory were going out of her. A group of A.D.C.'s and officials in shimmering multi-coloured uniforms hovered in a corner, silent and gaudy and obedient as children's toys. The Viceroy fussed with his gloves and said with affectionate asperity: "Come along, D, do. Time's gettin' on." The Vicereine sighed, with a last turn of her head, "It's a perfect ceiling!"

She crossed the shining floor, moving with a cultivated grace, and took the Viceroy's arm. "Just one more look at the Durbar Hall!" The Viceroy grunted. "Really, m'dear, we haven't time!" "O, go on with you," exclaimed the Vicereine, "they can wait for once. Do 'em good!" "What, in this temperature?" said the Viceroy, who was a kindly man, but he trailed obediently with her down the long corridor whose arches gleamed with vivid arabesques. The A.D.C.'s and officials shuffled a little and permitted themselves indulgent smiles. Outside, the high shadows of the pillars were sharp on white stone, the bronze and blue frieze of the bodyguard stood motionless in the sun.

"Batee jagow!" shrilled the Vicereine in a language and accent understood only by the English and their trained servants, two of whom, tactfully hidden in the shadows, now switched on the hidden lights which illuminated the vast dome of the Durbar Hall. Colour sprang out; a riot of arabesques in gold and green and scarlet. The Vicereine, gazing upwards, squeezed the Viceroy's arm. "It is lovely, isn't it?" The Viceroy obliged yet once again. "Of course, of course it's lovely—magnificent—you've made a fine job of all these ceilings. But we must," he added, as an afterthought, "we really *must* be going." "I suppose," said the Vicereine sighing, "I suppose we must." She turned away a tear glittered, and fell on to the sash of the Crown of India. But a moment later she was transformed. "Wait! Wait! Let me look at you!"

The A.D.C.'s had lined up in the order of procession. The Vicereine's eye travelled expertly over the details of their uniforms: a pat here, a tweak there; a careful once-over for the Viceroy. "All in order? Off we go, then!" They moved out into the sunshine: there was a great clash of metal as the bodyguard presented arms. Two and two, erect

and stiff and bright-coloured, the little procession descended on the red carpet which bisected the gleaming expanse of marble steps. The carriage doors closed. The grooms mounted. The procession moved off. The Vicereine put up her parasol. The outgoing Viceroy had left the Viceroy's House, and the fact was transmitted by telephone to the station-master and the perspiring notabilities on the platform and in the broiling marquee behind it.

But there was nobody, for the moment, to notice whether the Vicereine put up her parasol or not. For the bodyguard, it was all routine: one Viceroy or another, one parasol or another. The forecourt was empty and so was the drive beyond it—the dribbling fountains and the pale statues of past Viceroys were the only occupants of the vast Princes Place. Beyond, the mile-and-a-half avenue of Kingsway, flanked by quarter-mile lawns and rigid strips of ornamental water six inches deep, boasted no sign of human life. The carriage clip-clopped into the streets of New Delhi, nearly deserted in the afternoon heat. At a corner, Mr. Bramble, representing Red Cat Tobacco in India, but just then walking with two girl-friends, swept off his topi, shouted "Hip!" and, feeling discouraged, altered it to "Good Luck!" The Vicereine acknowledged it with a graceful bow. The Viceroy did nothing, but said, "Who's that feller?" to which the Vicereine, who couldn't remember, gave no reply.

And now the marquee came into sight, far down the empty approach to the ceremonial station. To the right, behind high-spiked palisades, the railway lines ran towards Bombay. To the left, the crazy jumble of houses bordering the street gave no hint of life: the windows were shuttered and the roof-tops empty. Gradually the long line of cavalry preceding the carriages came to a stop, erect lances making a lovely pattern against the blue sky. The A.D.C.'s, clutching the beautifully-printed gilt and morocco booklets whose fifty pages gave every time and personage connected with the departure, hurried forward to open the carriage door. Down another red carpet Their Excellencies advanced with dignity, and stood. The band near the platform struck up the National Anthem. With a flutter of Debenham and Snelgrove's copies of last year's Ascot frocks, the loyal subjects in the marquee rose to their feet.

An A.D.C., unperturbed as a B.B.C. announcer, now preceded Their Excellencies, calling names from a printed list—"Sir Juniper and Lady Hogg"—"The Honourable Mr Rowbotham"—"Sir Fatehboy Dumblewallah"—"Mr and Mrs. Pragg-Smiley." The Vicereine, who prided herself on a regal memory, had a word for each. "And how is your dear wife?" she asked Sir Fatehboy, who, with the greatest courtesy, his wife being dead, replied that she was well. The Vicereine passed on, and laid a white-gloved hand on Mrs. Pragg-Smiley's arm. "Quite better, my dear?" Mrs. Pragg-Smiley, whose health was excellent though her complexion was poor, mumbled an acknowledgement with her curtsy, well-pleased by this quite unwarranted gesture of intimacy. Tears ran down the Vicereine's cheeks, without, however, marring her undoubted good looks. Their Excellencies crossed the lawn and moved up the flight of steps to the ceremonial platform.

Here were gathered in a line, opposite the white Viceregal train, some twenty of India's Princes, glittering survivals of a gorgeous past. The Nawab of Tughlukabad had dressed himself for the occasion in a shimmering coat of the Vicereine's favourite heliotrope: diamonds and amethysts sparkled from his turban. His two small sons, pretty as Murillo

urchins, were dressed with exact similarity. The Maharajah of Sikri, well known for being able to swallow twenty dry Martins in succession without the slightest effect being apparent, was wearing the matchless Sikri pearls below his black curling beard, and stood with immense dignity, turning his weary, blue-circled eyes now on the Viceregal Train, now on Their Excellencies, as though the whole thing were an illusion, as indeed it was. Their Excellencies passed down the line, jewels dancing and brocades gleaming in the sunlight.

And now they stood framed in the specially-wide door of their saloon, and slowly, very, very slowly, the great white train began to move. The band struck up Auld Lang Syne. At the same moment, on the road opposite the station, a tonga driven at a reckless pace, collided with a fat Secretariat superintendent on a bicycle, knocking him into the gutter. The whole street burst into a frenzy of life and noise. Shutters were flung back, roof-tops spouted gesticulating figures. Humanity, clad in every conceivable variation of Eastern and Western dress, seemed to spring from the pavements. And, as the last strains of 'Auld Lang Syne' died, somewhat feebly, away, India could be heard discussing, in a most interested fashion, the exact merits of the tongawallah's case.

CHAPTER I

Men, as a rule, pay scant attention to facts which conflict with their interests or self-conceit: history is distorted to produce national haloes, and the individual weaves the warp of his experience with a comfortable weft of self-justification. The true autobiography of a nasty mind has yet to be written. By an unconscious compensatory action so deep-rooted that only a saint can pluck it out, we continually rationalise our own actions and mistakes in the best possible light: we put, so to speak, the best face on them. Such an instinct is indeed as natural an antidote to despair as is the instinct of self-preservation to suicide. I have sometimes wondered, and it is a not quite silly speculation, whether Nature has not endowed every human being with a comforting ability to perceive, on looking into a mirror, at least some trace of beauty: experience suggests that it is probable: and, if it is so, I have clearly no means of ascertaining how repulsive I may really be, although I strive to think that I am not so bad: and so, I daresay, does everybody else. There must be precious few who do not believe that, in spite of minor weaknesses, their character is noble, if only others would understand it: that their beliefs and opinions, in spite of the strange opposition of others, are fundamentally right: and that their nation is superior to any other. Churchill, Hitler, Stalin certainly believe these things: and so may Indian leaders: but everybody can't be right.

Hugh Walpole, when I once rashly pointed out to him that an extremely valuable book in his shelves bore the name and bookplate of a mutual friend, exclaimed: "Yes! Isn't that extraordinary?" I stayed with her once in New York, and she had the cheek to write and accuse me of having taken the book: of course I wrote and said that, as an author and connoisseur, I was exceedingly rigid in such matters and would never dream of doing such a thing. And then—years afterwards—the book turned up here! I could only conclude that it *preferred* being.

with me!" He told this as a good joke which somehow implied that he was a hapless and innocent victim of the incident—he wasn't to blame at all. It seemed to me that his mental process had been somewhat as follows. It would be very awkward to confess and return the book—it was a genuine mistake and he had never meant to pack it—she would have forgotten all about it, she was rich and could replace it, she didn't *really* care about books—the book was really better and safer with him. He had—though almost unconsciously—acquitted himself of the crime as we are all in the habit of doing. The people who fawned on Edward the Eighth up to the moment that the abdication was signed "rationalised" his overthrow by inventing a host of dirty and untrue stories about him, the crowds, and newspapers, who adulated Mr Chamberlain for his policy of peace "rationalised" his downfall by judging him as a bad warlord, the House of Commons "rationalised" the profiteering charges against Mr. Denis Kendall by saying that he made good guns. We shut our eyes to that which we do not wish to see and we shut them so automatically that we can easily come to believe with perfect sincerity, that it does not exist.

No solution of the Indian problem will ever be found until and unless we on our part, and Indians no less on theirs, are willing to recognize these "blind spots": no solution, that is, which would absolve Britain from tyranny, and make India her friend. A solution of one kind or another is of course coming—it is daily taking shape, but the shape which it is taking is an evil one for Britain, and very possibly for India too. The profound social and economic changes deriving from—and also causing—the disruptive effects of war are not, and will not be, arrested by a political deadlock, though the deadlock may dangerously obscure their advance. However engagingly His Majesty's Complacent Ministers may tell us that this fog of obscurity is the "restoration of law and order" or "the only thing we could do," it is a fog in which the last remnants of British-Indian collaboration may be irretrievably lost. And for my part I believe that it is important for Britain, for India, and for the world, that that collaboration should continue, India, spurred and awakened by this war, as well as by her own growing nationalism, can hardly fail to become, in another few decades at most, a mighty power. An India permanently alienated from Britain, and falling willy-nilly into an Asian powergroup in a race for material gain, will be a threat not only to Britain herself and to the British Empire, but a threat also to world peace. An India friendly and grateful to a generous Britain could provide, as perhaps no other country, a much-needed link between East and West, and a tempering perhaps, of the Western Creed of Grab. But if, on either side, faces are to be obstinately saved and prejudices mulishly followed, we may await agreement till Kingdom Come. Some prejudices are breaking down: few people, for instance, can now seriously credit the dear old story that England conquered India in a sort of bumbling absent-minded fit, and just had to stay to keep order. Few can deny that England has exploited India. Few can avoid the conclusion—and I think every decent Englishman hates it—that India is a subjected and occupied country—a country in which, between August 1942 and January 1943, the police and troops opened fire on unarmed crowds no less than 538 times. But the prejudices which remain, on the British side, are still serious enough. (The first is that Indians are silly, feckless and corrupt, and therefore cannot govern themselves. The second is that British democratic

institutions are suitable to India. The third is that Indian "divisions" make it impossible for the British to relinquish power. The fourth is that India should obediently, at the bidding of Britain, commit herself to a war which was none of her making and from which, like Egypt or Turkey, she might herself choose to hold aloof if she were free.)

These prejudices, running like an undercurrent through British politics and British publicity, must poison the atmosphere of all negotiation. They are the expression of domination and aggression: the denial of freedom and free choice. Their adoption, subconscious adoption if you like, by British negotiators must arouse in Indians a natural desire to hurl any offer into the dustbin. But on the Indian side too there are prejudices which vitiate agreement. (The first is that India is a nation. The second is that a transfer of power is simple. The third is that Britain has invented the communal question. The fourth is that all Englishmen despise Indians. The fifth is that Britain never keeps her promises.) These prejudices on the Indian side may be well and truly relied upon to drive English negotiators mad. Statesmen and statisticians dealing, as they are apt to say, with "hard blunt facts," may wave prejudice aside: but Lord Willingdon's remark that "atmosphere" is the only thing which really matters in India is a profound one: and unless, the ruling Imperialist power, on the one hand, and the irritable subject-race, on the other, will drop their respective—even though sometimes justified—prejudices, the atmosphere of all discussions must necessarily be that of a powder-magazine.

Before considering the "atmosphere" creating and created by such prejudices, which will be the main purpose of this book, some attempt must be made to look at India in the war and the post-war world. Volumes could be written round such a subject, and this brief glance must be limited and generalized. But the attempt is essential if only as a challenge to the prejudice that India can somehow remain what she has been—a rather one-horse, sometimes uncomfortable, but always profitable, appanage of the British Raj.

CHAPTER II

What is this war about, and for what are millions of human beings on either side dying and suffering? That was the question asked by the Indian Congress in September 1939, and the query has echoed unanswered down the years until, perhaps, it found a reply at the Mansion House—"we mean to hold our own." On the face of it, and according to the propaganda services of the democratic and totalitarian governments respectively, it is, on the one hand, a war for "freedom": on the other, for a "new order." Slogans are not, as a rule, very useful indications of the real causes and aims of war, since here again a process of self-justification on both sides fogs the issue: but in this particular case freedom and a new order (which has very little truck with freedom) are not inappropriate labels, if their implications are honestly faced. The democratic side envisages freedom, roughly, as the right of the individual to live his own life, not to be regimented or spied upon or otherwise too much interfered with, and to labour for himself and his family rather

than for "the State." The totalitarian side, with which in this context, and dropping prejudices, Soviet Russia must be included, envisages the new order as a planned regimentation of men in the service of "the State." (Can it be supposed that, when world-wide industrialization slows down or stops the "expansion of trade" in unexploited areas, the State, faced with the demand for security and employment, and forced into the position of continuing military and industrial power, battling for contracting markets, can leave the individual free from regimentation?) The democratic side aims, rather vaguely, at a society founded on a somewhat untidy—but not necessarily thereby unattractive—individualism which has worked fairly well (for at least the privileged sections) in the past. The totalitarian side, rejecting individualism, aims at human efficiency through disciplined order. These are the obvious aims and slogans of our war—the outward symbols of deeper and more complex changes. But no military triumphs are going to decide the fundamental puzzles of mankind—ideas, and the circumstances which create them, are stronger than any victory by force. We are faced, ultimately, by the bankruptcy of democracy and dictatorship alike. We have to ask ourselves, first, whether modern war can be won by any but totalitarian methods, and whether, in the process of winning, we can avoid becoming the very thing which we fight. "Modern arms, whoever employs them, can destroy civilization. Modern regimentation—the *sine qua non* of the efficient employment of modern arms—must destroy all humaneness. It does not matter under what flag, under which slogan, you employ such methods. If you drink cyanide wishing to commit suicide or if you drink it believing it to be a cordial, the consequences must be the same. Means control ends."*

The shocks of war have already snuffed out a sufficient number of prejudices to make most sensible people realise that the democracies are in a considerable muddle about their "ideology." To speak of "freedom" while employing conscription, grasping an Empire, imprisoning "seditious" people, and exercising drastic methods of censorship, is as confusing a slogan—though confusion is emphasised by the need for rationalising the drastic sacrifices of war—as was, in peace-time, the idea of a "free" country when applied to millions of unemployed who were economically servile. To believe that "democracy" rules through a Long Parliament dominated by war propaganda, while an electoral truce freezes slowly into non-party government, may be to believe in something which is already dead. We comfort ourselves with assurances (looking into the mirror of the past) that "when the war is over" these apparent anomalies will vanish at a wave of a popular, or Churchillian, wand. But will they? After so destructive a war, "normalcy"—in the sense of returning to the systems and institutions of 1939—could be re-established only after several years, if at all. And because over the whole period of war and post-war millions of men and women will have become used—even attached—to a system which produces work and high wages, it is highly doubtful whether there will be much desire to alter that system. The mould into which war has crushed society is likely to be largely retained, even if modified and expanded by the assets of peace. In other words, the habit of individualism will have been to a great extent suppressed, and a measure, at least, of regimentation will have been accepted.

* Gerald Heard: *Man the Master*.

If, then, the number of people needing employment coupled with the development of the industrial machine forces us, willy-nilly, into the wholesale regimentation of labour, what follows? Industry must have access to markets and raw materials, and, when once powerfully regimented, is not likely to let national boundaries or customs barriers stand in its way "Experience has shown that the existence of a large number of sovereign nations, especially in Europe is incompatible with contemporary economic and social needs. The system simply does not work. The complex division of labour, the flow of trade and raw materials made possible and demanded by modern technology, were strangled in a network of diverse tariffs, laws, currencies, passports, boundary restrictions, bureaucracies and independent armies. It has been clear for some time that these were going to be smashed the only problem was who was going to do it and how and when. Now it is being done under the prime initial impulse of Germany. Anyone who believes that there is the slightest chance for the restoration of the pre-1939 system in Europe is living in a world of fantastic dreams, not on the earth. The United States can keep declaring from now forever that it will never recognise alterations of boundaries brought about by force (the only way in which important alterations have ever been brought about in history . . .) and London and Washington can continue 'accepting' the dozen refugee governments that run from one capital to another and will doubtless end up at the North Pole, but these highly moral fictions are not going to pump back one drop of blood into the veins of a political system which is already dead"*

The writer whom I have quoted develops, with considerable force, the argument that democracy and dictatorship, as well as nationalism, must disappear, at any rate as we know them, and give way to a world of three or four super-States, based on the chief centres of industry and that in such a world, sovereignty will pass entirely into the hands of the "managers"—that is to say, the bureaucrats and technicians who corporately control the machine. It would be the rule—and necessarily, as in Russia, the authoritarian rule—of the skilled mechanic: the world of planners the logical development of a system which takes as sole and sufficient aim the material comfort produced by the machine.

Any such guess at the possible shape of things to come will naturally be modified and interpreted in different ways by different readers. I, certainly, do not regard with any enthusiasm the bleak world of robot efficiency which it suggests. But signs are not wanting that such a world is possible and even probable. Among such signs is the almost unconscious growth of regimentation and brutalisation the failure of the Christian Church, and the excessive preoccupation with material success and material welfare, a preoccupation to which the Christian Church and Socialism generally have both fallen victims. If mankind, driven by the Industrial Machine, Big Business (under the guise of prosperity) and Advertisement (under the guise, as Max Beerbohm put it, of "all for each and each for all"), into atheism and a cut-throat race for worldly success and power, travels further and further, as it seems to be doing, from all conceptions of the spirit, then the super-states, and the wars between the super-states, must come until at last the world is unified by

* James Burnham: *The Managerial Revolution*

force and slaughter under a caucus of bureaucrats and technicians who will rule and regiment the servile millions, and realize on a universal scale the dream of Hitler *

That would be a dusty answer. It would not, in fact, be an answer at all, because it would mean that man's growing individualism had been temporarily and arbitrarily, but not permanently, checked. Man's goal cannot be merely the anthheap or the beehive. But paradoxically it is the growth of individualism which is forcing him into that view. Individualism implies criticism, and criticism destroys cohesion. The educated individual necessarily finds it increasingly difficult to regard symbols—whether priests or kings or parliaments or flags—with such degree of awe as would command his unthinking respect and obedience. And a free society, based on the right of self-determination, tends to break up. The tendency is swiftly counteracted by the leaders who scent its danger and the power of the machine, the immense reach and monopoly of propaganda, and the speed-up of communications are trump cards in their hands. The individual can hardly, for the moment, escape the anthheap they create. Aims and loyalties, other than purely material ones, being lost, the cry is for work, for planning, for regimentation. So the democracies turn themselves into dictatorships, and the dictatorships into super-states, and the world into a factory. But the growth of individualism cannot be checked. Sooner or later man, seeing that the race for material possessions must lead to war, and war back to domination, and domination back to war again, must ask—as indeed he increasingly asks to-day—“What is it all for?”

To some, of course, the goal of material prosperity for all mankind, even if punctuated by wars, may seem good enough. and it is not to be despised. But it is doubtful whether, by itself, it is a guarantee of peace or even happiness: doubtful, too, whether anything better can be attained without a measure of self-sacrifice of which few signs are apparent. We are caught in the race for “prosperity,” and, when we speak of “fighting to survive,” we mean not survival from extermination, which we perfectly well know can't happen, but survival of our high standards of living and power at the expense—necessarily—of other groups and nations. The prosecution of war on the present scale presupposes a victorious “peace” which would necessarily include domination, if not Vansittarte extermination. Such a peace must breed vendettas and cannot last. The “civilized” nations have so entangled themselves in the net of materialism that they can have prosperity only at the price of war, and nothing but war as the result of prosperity.

If the western world can keep its strength, and its belief in materialism, and can impose a bureaucratized regimentation on mankind, then clearly

* Cf. Gerald Heard “Those countries which have not been forced, as yet, openly to abandon the democratic form are nevertheless developing in one or other of two ways, neither of which indicates that their political structure will survive. Secession in one form or another is sapping their power. It is easy to see why the small democracies had to disappear. There was no lower limit to their secessionary process. Democracy in that form can only be defined as the right to self-determine until each individual votes himself out from any community into complete anarchy. We have reached a stage in the democracies when the government is not ourselves. It is the board of directors who for the time being has the general supplies in its hand. If, then, we organize as a pressure group, this board can be made to give our side (at what cost to the whole does not concern us) absolute security. This is all that the ordinary man to-day desires, and it is all that is needed to destroy liberty. For it reduces every individual to a fed, ruled, ranked and disciplined member, first of the dominating party and then of the party-state.” *Man the Master*, Gerald Heard, p. 26 et seq.

the millions of India, as well as those of Africa and China, must be customers of the prosperity stores. They must share the tendency towards larger units and regimentation. They must copy the materialism of the West. India's freedom must be conditioned by the paramount necessity that her four hundred millions should share in the general industrialization: and in time they too will learn their lesson, shut their doors with protective tariffs, and go battling, when they are strong enough, for new markets. New and greater wars will shake the universe.

Is it not still a dusty answer? Is it not perhaps possible that the "efficiency" which we are so proudly copying from the dictators may prove an illusion and a trap? Is it not worth at least examining systems and ways of thought which do not seem to lead so directly to anarchy and chaos? We are now putting into practice that remedy for unemployment which we once, when Hitler employed it, condemned as illusory and evil—the manufacture of armaments and many people, ironic as it seems, are happier and better-off as the result of war. But when the fever of fanaticism has passed, and the cold fit of peace takes us again, what chance is there that that remedy, that happiness, can survive? Shall we not be looking for something more inspiring than war and the factory, the factory and war?

It is in some such context that we should, it seems to me, approach the problems of India. India has some right—at least I felt so when I was there—to regard Europe's material acquisitiveness as a system morally and spiritually bankrupt, a warning to avoid any similar course. India has little cause to assume that the constitutions and customs of the West, even if they fitted her, would lead her millions to happiness. India may well suppose that her own long history furnishes better examples of living, her own way of life a better chance of contentment, than those of the machine-driven West. And Indian voices which speak of resistance to industrialization, of simple living, of non-violence, even of religion, may not be so crazy as we, at this particular moment, are apt to think them. If we can grant such a possibility, we may see that India as a friend and free ally, even if, like Egypt, neutral, might prove of greater value than India as a sullen and resentful servant. We can, at least, attempt to view the Indian problem with friendly and sympathetic eyes.

CHAPTER III

To write these things is to stir two deep prejudices of the moment and to invite for oneself the accusation of a different and less popular bias. The two cardinal beliefs of the moment are, first, that war is inevitable, that we must bend all our energies to it, and that we must, as far as we can, draw other nations into it on our side: secondly, that we shall avoid future wars and make the world "safe for democracy" by planning the eradication of want, ignorance, and so forth. To attack these beliefs at all, when the whole propaganda machine is constantly asserting them, is dangerous and probably, at least for the present, vain: there is obviously a strong argument for planning as against *laissez-faire*, and there is a popular national appeal in the assertion that the root causes of twentieth century war lie in Hitler and the German nation rather than in Britain's

desire to hold a quarter of the earth. But it is, perhaps, wise to remember that the prejudices of war are seldom lasting; the fears and hatreds engendered—and now most powerfully engendered by every device of high-pressure salesmanship in the all-permeating fields of advertisement, film, and radio—die quickly away and are replaced by a natural reaction towards peace and goodwill. Vansittart's "Black Record" must be balanced by the fact that, in the last brief century and a half, Britain had made war upon America, France, Italy, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Japan, and Germany. And in the same period she has also been the ally of each of them. In each case, friend or ally as circumstances happened to direct, the propaganda machine has been at work to engender the required hatred or the required fulsome praise. We are now at it again, and there is no earthly reason to suppose that our present momentary loves and hatreds will survive longer than previous war emotions.

This, then, is only to suggest that temporary prejudices may be, however worthy they appear, misleading. The scientist or fact-finder, so popular to-day, is prejudiced by the belief that all things can eventually be explained in material terms: but to explain why Velasquez was a great painter, or why the legend of Christ has affected millions of men, will bring him to disaster. The two important points about prejudice are, first, to recognise it: second, to assess it for what it is worth. That three candles or one magpie or thirteen at table are unlucky are prejudices easy to recognise as such, but few would seriously argue that Christ was a bad man, Socrates a poor thinker, or Shakespeare a mediocre poet. The prejudice that these, of their kind, were good is so universally accepted that it is as near the truth as the human race is likely to get. Some prejudices, therefore, are common to us all and perhaps we may go one step further, and suggest that "the good, the beautiful, the true" are recognizable by most of us, even though they may be obscured, deliberately or unconsciously, by ambition or economic pressure. The reader who, after I had written, over the pseudonym of Audax in the *Observer*, that Gandhi was merely putting into practice the fifth chapter of St. Matthew wrote to me at length to protest that "Jesus Christ had intended the Sermon, on the Mount to apply to individuals and not to governments," certainly carried his process of self-justification to extreme lengths, but, ludicrous as his argument may appear, how many of us do, in fact, subscribe to it by our actions?

What has all this to do with India? Just this—that it is excessively difficult to approach the subject of India, like the subject of war, without a violent controversy arising as to what is *good* and what is *expedient*. The central question about India, as about war, is: does the end justify the means? Can we justifiably force India to adopt Western wars as well as Western ways? Even if we can, and if logical argument says, that it is expedient and we must, will the end be what we hoped for? Will subjected India ever fight whole-heartedly for dominating Britain? Will she be ready, in a post-war world, to join friendly hands with a Britain which will sorely need her markets? In the difficult days to come, would not an India which had chosen freely to fight, or even, like Egypt and Turkey, to remain neutral, prove a more powerful and steadfast ally than an India still sore and sullen from the stings of imprisonment and repression? May not the present deadlock, the present bankruptcy of statesmanship, succeed in alienating from Britain the potential friendship of four hundred million people—four-fifths of the British Empire?

I don't know the answers Nobody does I can only suggest that, as I at least see it, the question of India won't be solved, or even thought out until it gets put into this kind of framework and that "facts and figures," though they may be of assistance in their right place, tend (particularly in an age which lays so heavy a stress on "specialisation" and "experts") to produce, like some deadly accurate architectural elevation, a picture which is entirely misleading because, accurate as it may be, it leaves out that indefinable and over-riding factor which you may call the effect, the sum total, the impression or the spirit of the whole

CHAPTER IV

Very well, then you see that this book is not going to make mathematical progressions of facts and figures Those you can find in the numerous books written about India, books which are not difficult, even now, to obtain, and which are monuments to the persevering research and lucid thought of their authors I am grateful for what they have taught me, and I would be the last to detract from their ability and distinction But I cannot altogether rid myself of a feeling that, if I myself were their subject, I should hear them say something like this. "Lionel Fielden is six foot two inches in height and weighs ten stone He is physically feeble because (a) he does not take enough exercise, which he detests, and (b) he does not eat sufficient carrots which, he alleges, make him sick. He has been given a first-class education, but has nevertheless been unable to appreciate (a) the British Empire, (b) war, and (c) huntin' and shootin'. He quarrels with his wife, and indeed with everybody. He is hasty and impulsive We therefore consider that, before he can be allowed to stand on his own feet, go for a walk, have a bath, etc., alone, he should, for a period which we must determine according to his progress, (1) eat four pounds of carrots at every meal, (2) prove his ability to run five times round the Serpentine before breakfast, (3) learn by heart all the works of Arthur Bryant, (4) listen to all B B C War Commentaries and, if possible, meet Lord Vansittart, (5) do Home Guard sentry-duty, so as to learn to shoot people, (6) keep a policeman in the house to prevent him beating his wife, and (7) count twenty before doing anything at all. We have examined his case with great care, and we are confident that, if these directions are followed, he will, at the age of 80 or at the end of the war, whichever comes first, be able, at least partially, to stand on his own feet" If, now, I were rather grumbly about this, and said that I liked quarrelling and should surely die if I were much longer condemned to live in an English climate, I should be told that I was most naughty and unreasonable, when the nice experts had taken so much trouble. I do seem sometimes to hear India being a bit grumbly that way, in spite of all the accurate and factual books written about her

Of course, this is not at all a popular way to go on. The statisticians and the heavyweights won't like it. They have not only their vested interests in facts to maintain, but also a quite sincere belief in them But I, on the contrary, want to get as far away from them as I can. Facts are too easy. During my five years in India, I must have covered positively miles of paper with facts: they shot into my secretary's notebook like

bullets from a Spitfire. Facts about the size of studios or the cost of transmitters or the number of licenses or the payment of announcers or the hours of transmission or the manufacture of receivers or the revenue from customs duties never in the least helped me to decide what the dickens Indian broadcasting was *for*, though they did obligingly obscure my worries on that head. And I take leave to doubt, I take leave, in fact, more and more every day, to doubt whether facts about Muslims and Hindus and Princes and Resources and Irrigation and Lord Linlithgow and, as Mr Edwin Haward has it, sun-ebonied Dravidians, will, though they may be balm to our sore of uneasiness, get us very much further. We have perhaps rather to ask ourselves, and try honestly to answer, some simple and frank questions about India. These questions would be phrased differently by different people. I shall put them as follows.

1. Is there any real reason why India should take part in this war?
2. If India were of no use to us, either as an Imperial Link, an arsenal, a market, or a port, should we stay there?
3. If we are "responsible" for the internal peace of India, why did we not intervene to keep the internal peace of Manchuria, Spain, America in the days of the Civil War, or France in the time of the Revolution? (That we did try to intervene in the Russian revolution may or may not seem a matter for self-congratulation.)

4. Is India a happier country since the British Raj was established?

5. If elected Ministers could rule the Indian Provinces effectively from 1937 to 1939, is there any reason to suppose that they could not do so now?

6. Is there any political body larger or more representative than Congress, and can it be supposed that the gaoling of its leaders is in accordance with the unity, happiness, or will of the Indian peoples?

There are six questions, which do not need—*peace* the statisticians—a great many facts for their replies. The average Britisher would answer them quite sincerely somewhat as follows:

To the first, yes, of course: India otherwise would be enslaved by Japan.

To the second, possibly not, but the question doesn't arise: we *are* there, and India is an integral part of the Empire, and we "can't" get out.

To the third, because we have, willy-nilly, a "responsibility" for India, and we had not got similar responsibilities elsewhere.

To the fourth, yes: we have given India Law and Order, Railways, Irrigation, Representative Institutions, and more unity than she has ever known before.

To the fifth, no—but they resigned office themselves.

To the sixth, no, but Congress will accept nothing short of complete independence, which other Indian parties won't accept, and it is doubtful whether Congress would support the war.

Such answers are perfectly reasonable, provided that it is assumed that India's happiness lies along the path of war-winning and the adoption of a British—or even European—structure of government and administration. But it is also just possible that these things may not be so excellent as our natural prejudices in their favour lead us to believe. To imagine this may require almost the effort needed to imagine a fourth dimension; but let us at least look at the result such an effort might have on the replies to the questions I have put. Suppose, for instance, that they are being answered by an Indian who is intensely proud of his own traditions,

and regards Europeans as barbarians who are continually fighting, who use force to dominate other peaceful peoples, who think chiefly in terms of big business, whisky, and bridge; as people of comparatively recent growth, who, while they put an exaggerated value on plumbing, have managed to spread tuberculosis and venereal disease all over the world; and as people who have now very little regard for religion or the arts. This Indian will hold—and I would be chary of contradicting him—that Kabir is no less a poet than Shakespeare, and that the Vedas are no less wise or profound than the Bible; he will say that to sit in the water in which you have washed, instead of bathing yourself in running water, is not clean, but dirty and disgusting, he will show, and I shall agree with him absolutely, that the English are a dirty and even a smelly nation compared with Indians, he will assert, and I am not at all sure that he is wrong, that the use of half-washed forks, spoons and knives by different people for food is revoltingly barbaric when compared with the exquisite manipulation of food by Indian fingers, he will be confident that the Indian room, with its bare walls and beautiful carpets, is infinitely superior to the European clutter of uncomfortable chairs and tables and lastly he will say something like this “India is as large, and just as varied, as Europe you people are always telling us that we should not quarrel, but *you* never stop fighting. you tell us to federate and be unified, but you can’t come within a thousand miles of unifying Europe. You speak very very loudly about Christianity, and you do not, as far as I can see, carry out one single one of its precepts: you condemn us as barbaric or ignorant if we have a riot, but your riots in Europe are more barbaric than anything else in history” And now, if you will bear with him—and he is numberless—he will answer my questions somewhat like this:

1 Should India take part in this war?

“I don’t know We Indians certainly hate aggression, but you must not forget that aggression, for us, has meant Mr Jones, Mr Smith and Mr. Brown from England, whom we have—reluctantly, believe us—come to recognise, in these last twenty years, as ignorant, stupid, and unsympathetic: who make money—far more than they could in England—out of our poverty-stricken country, and take it back to Cheltenham (they never want to settle down with us) They don’t—though some of the English once did—take any interest in our literature or poetry or drama or history They exclude us from their bridge-and-tennis-and-jazz clubs, and seem to despise us. They will not recognise degrees or even teaching in our own languages: we have to learn everything through the medium of English, and consequently we can’t learn it very well. And in this way, unless we struggle very hard indeed, our children are forced to grow up in ignorance of the literature and traditions which we are proud of, and believe in. We cannot, if we want to get Government jobs—and there are scarcely any others—afford *not* to adopt European clothes, furniture, cutlery and manners: but they are, and remain, strange and ugly to us. We do not really want to be ruled by anybody: we would like to live our own lives in the way in which our climate, religion, history, and tastes seem to us to point. At the beginning of this war, England was asked, in the Congress resolution of 1939, whether the struggle was an Imperialist one, in which case India could have nothing to do with it, or a fight for the real freedom of peoples, in which India would be intensely interested. No adequate reply has ever been given. We must deduce the obvious.

If you ask whether we are willing to be ruled by Japan, I must, if I am honest, reply: No, we are not *willing* to be ruled by anyone, but is there any real reason for *us* to suppose that Japan, which at least speaks of "co-prosperity in Asia," and is Oriental in thought, would be *worse* than England, which puts our noblest men in gaol, machine-guns our people from the air, whips them in the streets, and has never begun to treat Indians as equals? There is, moreover, no certainty that Japan would, in fact, rule us if, for instance, we followed the example of Egypt, which has never declared war (a fact of which you people seem to be ignorant), there is at least a chance that the millions in China and Russia would treat us as brothers—and that is something which your Mr. Smith and Jones and Brown will never do. We do happen to think that we can look after ourselves, and that that isn't just a question of gunpowder and we dislike above all things being snubbed and patronised, which is clearly what you are going to do to us, in terms of the Cripps offer, after the war. If we were in a position to tell *you* that you and Europe could not be free until you had made a European Federal Constitution on an Oriental model, you would feel very much the same as we do. And if we, without consulting you at all, had declared war for you as you did for us, you might feel as doubtful as we do about the necessity of taking part in foreign massacres. That you have succeeded in raising an army of 1½ million Indians—one in 300, as against the 20 million army of China—is not due to any patriotic fervour for the King-Emperor, but simply to the fact that our 400 millions are so near the border-line of starvation that they must of sheer necessity act as mercenaries."

2. Would England stay in India, if India were not useful to her: in other words, would she stay on purely humanitarian grounds?

"Of course not. The answer is so obvious that one can't really attach any blame in this respect. India is rich and large: we would like it to give all it can to any and every people: what we resent is your hypocrisy when you say you are doing good to India, or staying there out of sheer self-sacrifice. You are holding India by force and getting a good deal out of it; such things as railways, commercial interests, Civil Service Pensions and even the upkeep of an Imperial Army in India pay dividends which, it may be argued, don't much benefit Indians. Granted that there are exceptions—missionaries, for instance, who do meritorious work in education and medicine, though we could wish that they'd waste less time in conversion, and realize that Mahomet may be, for our purposes, as inspiring as Christ, and also that Hinduism includes almost all Christian beliefs. Men of the type of C. F. Andrews or Verrier Elwin, we can respect and love: we don't want to turn them out: but, like any other people, we do rather resent being "used" for commercial and political and military ends, and told that it is 'good' for us."

3. Are the British "responsible" for Indian internal peace and order?

"Ah! that's a difficult question. You see you have never trusted *us* to form an army to keep order: you don't even now. You keep strict control of the forces which 'keep law and order.' If then you argue that if *you* went away, law and order would go too, you may logically be right: but that isn't altogether our fault. If you never trusted your son away from his Nannie until he was eighteen, you might argue quite correctly and factually that he would get into trouble in a night-club; he might equally feel that you hadn't given him much of a chance. But when Indian Ministries had some control—some of them still have—over Law and Order

they didn't seem to acquit themselves any worse than the British. And there is, I fear, a much more fundamental point in this question. So long as there is a third party to 'balance our claims,' we shall never agree at all. If you make us irresponsible about our own defence and government, we shall make the most of party or communal differences. You may think this is perverse, but let me put it to you in this way. If we held all the reins of ultimate power in England, and decided British policy, and paid the Army, Navy and Air Force (even if we paid them out of English funds), and wanted to hand England over to a 'National Government,' what should we do? Well, we might say that the Conservative and Labour votes were about equal, so that neither could be said to 'represent' England, and that the Liberals and Communists also represented a good many people. So, before we could possibly grant a National Government, we should have to get Mr. Churchill and Mr. Greenwood (no, we really couldn't believe in Mr. Attlee representing anybody) and Mr. Maxton and Mr. Harry Pollitt and Sir Archibald Sinclair to agree on every detail of the united government which they would form, and each of them would probably put up different schemes to us, and we should be dreadfully concerned about leaving England in such a muddle. Still, if we did leave, they would probably agree. Might it not be the same in India? But we Indians are inclined to go further, and say that if we do have to scrap with one another, well—it'll be our own scrap. And if Japan walked into the middle of it, it would be just too bad, but we might at least have found our souls, and be able better to resist aggression in unity and independence."

4. Has the British Raj made India a happier country?

"Very few Indians, outside those in Government jobs, would think so. But, since we are a philosophically-inclined people, we shall have to try to define happiness. You (as far as we can see) worship Mammon: you consider that 'success' equals 'wealth' equals 'happiness': you think the 'greatest' country is that which has most territory, or investments, or roads and railways or guns or bathrooms or radio-sets. We think rather differently. But let us assess your work in India in your own terms of happiness first. You have 'given' us railways, roads, telephones, radio, etc., but, although doubtless you've done it efficiently, perhaps more efficiently than we would have, you will remember, first, that they have paid good dividends to English shareholders and business men, and second, that we should probably have got them for ourselves, as, for instance, we got cinemas. Are we happier for these things? Well, it's a moot point. We can't help wondering, when we look at Europe, whether anyone is really much *happier* because he can travel faster or telephone or hear news bulletins. Of course, we can get relief to a famine-stricken area more quickly, doctors can get about faster, and riots can be more rapidly quelled, should I be very perverse if I pointed out that food can be more easily exported, causing famine, that swift communications spread disease, and that disturbances which were once local now tend to be continent-wide? You have 'given' us education: that is, you have used the Indian taxpayer's money to establish a system based on Lord Macaulay's belief that the Persian poets were addicted to unnatural vice, because they had a convention to avoid the pronoun 'she': and so he thought, very sincerely no doubt, that it would be better and more comfortable for everybody if we learned English, and, more than

that, learned everything in English.* We can't avoid this and if we do presume to go to a National School, where we sit comfortably on the ground and learn our own language and history—as for instance in Zakir Husain's admirable institution at Okhla—the Government won't recognise our degrees and we are hard put to it to earn a living. So most of us act in Shakespeare plays, which really aren't very much up our street, and know that our own culture is dying. And then, you have 'given' us—and this is your proudest claim—peace, law and order, and unity. Well, what about that? Certainly we don't like war on the scientific scale which you have invented, but the Pax Britannica seems to have made us rather colourless and effete. When I read Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, and see how much he enjoyed life, and what he was able to do, under conditions of practically no law and order at all, I wonder whether your law and order really adds very much much to human happiness. How would *you* like to have your peace, law and order dictated by Germany? After all, Germany is extremely good—better than you, it seems—at organising law and order and your C.I.D. in India is only a little less efficient than the Gestapo. You can travel—how often your writers say it!—from Peshawar to Cape Comorin without danger but I can't help wondering if I shouldn't enjoy the journey more if it had a spice of variety and adventure about it. Haven't you turned India into a very *dull* country? But unity—I mustn't forget that! You have given us a common language, which very few of us understand very well (what do you suppose we make of 'D'y'e ken John Peel?' or 'Auld Lang Syne,' or, as we don't use loaves, 'Half a loaf is better than no bread'?), and in this we are supposed to conduct, when we are allowed to, the business of the State. Does this make us happier? Well—let me rather ask: would it make Europe happier, if every country, not excluding England, had to conduct its affairs in German?"

5. Could elected Indian ministers rule effectively?

"I am bound to answer this in the affirmative, but you raise a very controversial point. Your democratic system won't work in India. If I were to say to you that Europe should be federated, and that the Germans, because they had numerical superiority, must have a permanent majority, you would be indignant. Yet that is exactly what you are asking in India. It is not, perhaps the idea of democracy which stands condemned, but rather its application to a continent of varied races and religions. You cannot apply it to Europe as a whole. You cannot yet apply it to India as a whole. I must admit that we Indians are divided on this point: the Hindus, who, with some exceptions, dislike fighting, naturally welcome a system which would apparently give them permanent domination (or, more important to the average man, permanent pick of jobs) in virtue of their numbers: the Muslims, not unnaturally, fear that their language, culture, and economic security would be endangered if such a thing came to pass: and other minorities share, in greater or less degree, Muslim apprehensions. In the provinces in which Congress Ministries were in power, there was certainly an *impression*—I shall not commit myself further than that—that Hindus got most of the jobs, and that Hindu language, culture and religion were encouraged. Two things must be

*"I have no knowledge of Sanskrit or Arabic. But . . . I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one of them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." Macaulay, 1834

said about this. First, what Government ever succeeded in wholly satisfying minorities? Secondly, our 'joint family system' made difficulties. You must understand the latter. We have unemployment on a colossal scale, and we do not have the dole. Therefore we must do something about it ourselves. Now suppose that this happens: a young man does well at school and is thought 'promising'. His father and mother have very little money, but if funds are raised by the *whole* family (or, as you might rather call it, clan) including uncles, aunts, first and second cousins, brothers and sisters-in-law and so on, he can be sent, say, to Oxford, where he gets a degree and passes, with luck, into the I.C.S. or other Government service. He now has three or four hundred a year, a pension, and a position. So the family must now ask him to pay some dividends on their investment. Either he will have them all (all who are unemployed, that is) to live with him, or he will find jobs for them, as, by virtue of his position, he can obviously do. He just can't evade this. So, if he has, let us say, five young cousins living on him and maybe with him, and daily pointing out that this or that job is vacant, he will have to be very strong-minded indeed if he doesn't try to push them in, especially if, as is quite probable, they are not markedly inferior to other candidates. Englishmen often say, therefore, that Indians are 'corrupt'. (Is there really no nepotism at all in English and American circles?) It is certainly clear that, while unemployment persists and the standard of living is as low as it is, there must be a *tendency* for Hindus to give jobs to Hindus and Muslims to Muslims. Therefore there will always be a sort of suspicious grudge against Hindus or Muslims who can, even through committees, give jobs: and it is very natural that men who fail (in a country where there will be 1,000 applications for *every* job) should ascribe their failure, not to their own shortcomings, but to the machinations of an opposite community. So, you can easily see, any Indian Government, Hindu, Muslim, Christian or British, has at least a ten to one chance of being *suspected* of favouritism and partiality, whatever its actions are: just as, indeed, if I may say so, a communist Government in England would be suspected of despoiling the rich, and a Blimp Government would be suspected of grinding the noses of the poor. And to this you must add the fact that we in India have to deal with a continent like Europe, and our elected Ministries had to start governing without much previous experience, and without being able to cast off the administrative heritage and convention of a quite different country: while you in England have been a good while at your particular game, which presumably suits you, and have to deal only with a little country, smaller than just one of our provinces like Bengal or Madras or the U.P. In the light of these things, I think that it must be allowed that elected Indian Ministers, starting as they did from scratch, and with a good many vetoes on their full freedom of action, certainly did a better job than the semi-elected councils* (somewhat resembling the Viceroy's present advisers) before them, and were improving all the time, as it was in their interest to do. There can, I feel, be little question that, if they were in power again, they would not only be more effective, but would command far greater confidence and support, than your present dictatorial set-ups. If you tell me that they resigned of their own accord, or were bullied into doing so by the Congress High Command, I must refer you to the Congress resolution of September 1939, and the Viceregal reply to it*: and I must ask you whether, if you

*The Congress boycotted the elections of 1920

had framed such a resolution (which seems to me a not ignoble interpretation of your own principles), and obtained such a reply, you would have thought it right to continue to hold office."

6. Is there any political body larger or more important than Congress, and is the gaoling of Congress leaders in accordance with a large section of Indian opinion and would Congress carry on the war for the United Nations?

"You see that I have added to your original question, which wasn't, as it stood, quite fair. We must be careful to separate the size, aims, and power of Congress from the immediate and inflammable issue of war. Let us first subtract war altogether, and go back to 1939. Congress had won the elections in seven provinces out of eleven, and was the largest single party in every province. Mr. Gandhi and Pandit Nehru were the living embodiments of India's desire for independence. They, with the Working Committee of Congress, were quite unmistakably the Unofficial Opposition to the British Raj. and so strong were they becoming that the Government, in order to avoid looking extremely foolish through successive votes of censure (nullified, of course, by Viceregal powers, but nevertheless embarrassing) in the Central Legislative Assembly, had perforce to flatter and rope in the minorities, in particular the Jinnah Muslim group. Some have called this the British policy of divide and rule* it is very doubtful if the British were, or even wanted to be, so Machiavellian as all that. It was rather, like the manufacture of armaments, or risky speculation, or the British National Government of 1931, a matter of expediency, and not a diabolical plot. If the British Government in India felt it necessary to increase the customs duty on motor-cars in order to raise money for the Army, and the Congress delegates, disapproving of *Imperialist* military expenditure, decided to vote it down and if at the same time the Viceroy had recently exercised his overriding powers, and felt that it would look bad to do so again, then the obvious political course was to make sure that Mr. Jinnah's group voted for the Government, and maybe to do so by suggesting that the next High Commissioner would be a Muslim, or that a larger percentage of Muslims would be allowed into the Department of Meteorology. I have taken, of course, a rather impossible situation as an illustration, because I don't want it to be supposed that I am drawing deductions from one particular case: but any parliamentarian can see how, without the necessity of anyone being particularly diabolic, matters could go. Nobody in those days suggested that Congress was not the core and centre of Indian Nationalist aspirations, and no national figures compared even remotely with the towering personalities of Gandhi and Nehru, except perhaps Rabindranath Tagore, who stood outside politics, but was quite clearly sympathetic to Congress. Congress, in spite of Viceroy and Governors and Safeguards and the British Army, was beginning to gather up the reins of power and I doubt whether anyone would have disputed the idea

*Shelvankar (*The Problem of India*, pp. 25 *et seq*) builds up a case for deliberate divide-and-rule policy which seems to me to be based on insufficient evidence and certainly contradicted by my own experience. I just don't believe that British administration was ever so Machiavellian as he suggests. If it had been, the success of its autocracy would be greater than it is. That the British bumbled along without desiring or attempting to unify India, and that they took advantage of its disunity, is true enough, no doubt, but it is highly debatable whether disunity between the Hindus and their Muslim conquerors was at any time less than it is to-day.

that it would be chiefly through Congress, as it pursued its long-appointed aim of unity and fair treatment, that Indian self-government would eventually come

But now let us add the war, and the issues which it raised. Indian self-government—in which your principles and the general tolerance of your people have played their part, though you must remember that the long line of our statesmen, patiently working for independence, from Tilak and Gokhale to Gandhi and Nehru, is the treasured symbol of our awakening—Indian self-government seemed within our grasp. The new dawn of our self-respect was breaking—when the blow fell. The war—no. I don't mean the war. I mean the declaration of war on behalf of India by the Viceroy—a declaration made without warning, without consulting a single Indian leader. On the greatest issue of all you did not see fit even to consult us—we who make up four-fifths of your Empire. In one terrible moment the house of cards collapsed—the hopes and beliefs and promises were nullified. We knew ourselves to be still a slave nation, cannonfodder for your Empire, we knew you to be still what you were before—the autocratic rulers of India. You did not understand that shock, and you do not, and perhaps cannot, understand it now, because *you do not know what it is to be ruled*. It is nearly impossible to draw a comparison at all, but you might perhaps receive a similar shock if Roosevelt were suddenly to sign peace with Hitler on behalf of Britain, without informing a single Englishman. However magnanimous those terms might be, would not some of you refuse to accept them, and continue the struggle? So with us. Could there ever have been the smallest doubt that Congress, which had fought aggression for fifty years, would fight it with all its power? Could a Hitler regime of regimentation, with its slighting contempt of dark races, or the Italian browbeating of Africa, be anything but vile to Indian minds? But—we were not consulted. We were the slaves, the mercenaries, the arsenal of your high Viceregal pleasure. That was what our 'self-government' had come to! Might not Indian Ministers have had, there and then, a fit and proper excuse for resignation? But they held their hand: they still hoped. On September 14, 1939, they addressed to the British Government an appeal, an appeal, I venture to think, not much less eloquent and just than some of the most famous speeches of your great orators. You can judge for yourself whether the reply was adequate. The Ministries resigned. To-day your prisons hold them, together with Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru—who, on June 17, after the failure of the Cripps mission, said this:

'I am convinced to-day more than ever that the doctrines of Naziism and Fascism are a menace to the freedom and peace of the world. I have repeatedly warned my countrymen against them. Mahatma Gandhi has, in his desire not to come in the way of the defence of India from aggression, said something which is extraordinary, coming as it does from him. He has agreed to the presence of foreign troops in India to fight the aggressor provided that they are here as allies of a free country. The defence of India is primarily an Indian concern, and a free India would defend herself to her utmost and would align herself with others who help her in doing so.'

"And now I have answered your six questions, and perhaps I may ask you, as an Englishman, just one. Why have you thrown these great hearted men, our leaders, into your jails?"

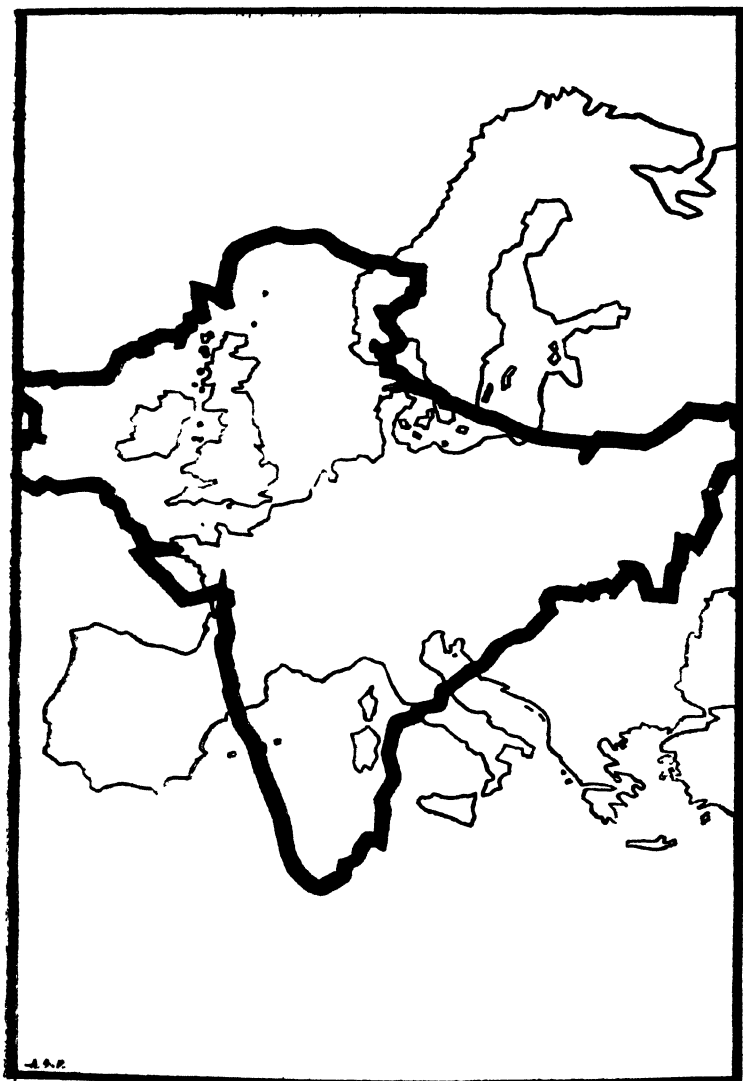
CHAPTER V

Thus my Indian might reply I do not pretend that he is typical, or that some Indians might not answer quite differently. I do not for a moment suppose that you will accept all his arguments. You may not even sympathise with him. But if I can at least convince you that *some* of these feelings, these prejudices if you like, *might* be held by Indians, if I can persuade you at least to put them beside your own feelings and prejudices then we shall have travelled a long way together. For it is only in these terms—in terms of feelings and not “facts”—that you can come to understand the attitude of Gandhi and Nehru, the failure of Cripps, and the present deadlock. An Indian may feel that England is a grand country, that the Cripps proposals might well have been accepted, that non-violence is a hopeless creed, that India must fight—but all such feelings may be shattered in a moment by pettifoggery Mr. Smith, I.C.S., who tells him how his own country should be run, and walks about as though he owned it. An Indian, like a Czecho-Slovak or Pole, may feel—and do not let us argue about degrees of cruelty when 1,000 Indians have been shot and 60,000 imprisoned by the self-appointed dominating power—that this country is “occupied”, and while subscribing wholeheartedly (indeed all the more if he does subscribe) to the British desire to defeat aggression and defend freedom, may see in British occupation the nearest example of aggression and the nearest denial of freedom. And all facts, however telling, however logical, may be as futile, compared to these feelings, as would be a million pounds to a man marooned on a desert island.

CHAPTER VI

And now, in order to be thoroughly inconsistent as is my habit, I shall embark on facts. Yes, we must have a few. First, some very plain and ordinary ones. India is a sub-continent. The sub indicates that it is not, like America or Australia, entirely surrounded by water. Europe is also a sub-continent, being attached to Asia by the Ural Mountains as is India by the Himalayas. You know all that? Yes, but I must insist that, in my experience, many English people, including not a few who have been to India, know it without really believing it. If you are switched about from one Government House to another, spending comfortable nights in the train between them, and meeting a very very small number of Englishmen and hardly ever an Indian, you are apt to get an impression that India is quite a small place. If your education continually presents you with an Atlas which shows India as a red triangle somewhat smaller than the Isle of Wight on another page, you may without difficulty carry through life a kind of fixed idea that India really is a little country, “little” meaning also unimportant and inhabited by natives and not comfortable and seldom visited by the best people. So I must insist, whether you like it or not, on putting India over Europe (see map opposite).

What this shows is that *distances* in India itself are similar to *distances* in Europe between, say, Ireland and Roumania, or Sweden and Greece. What it doesn't show—and what many people don't grasp—is that

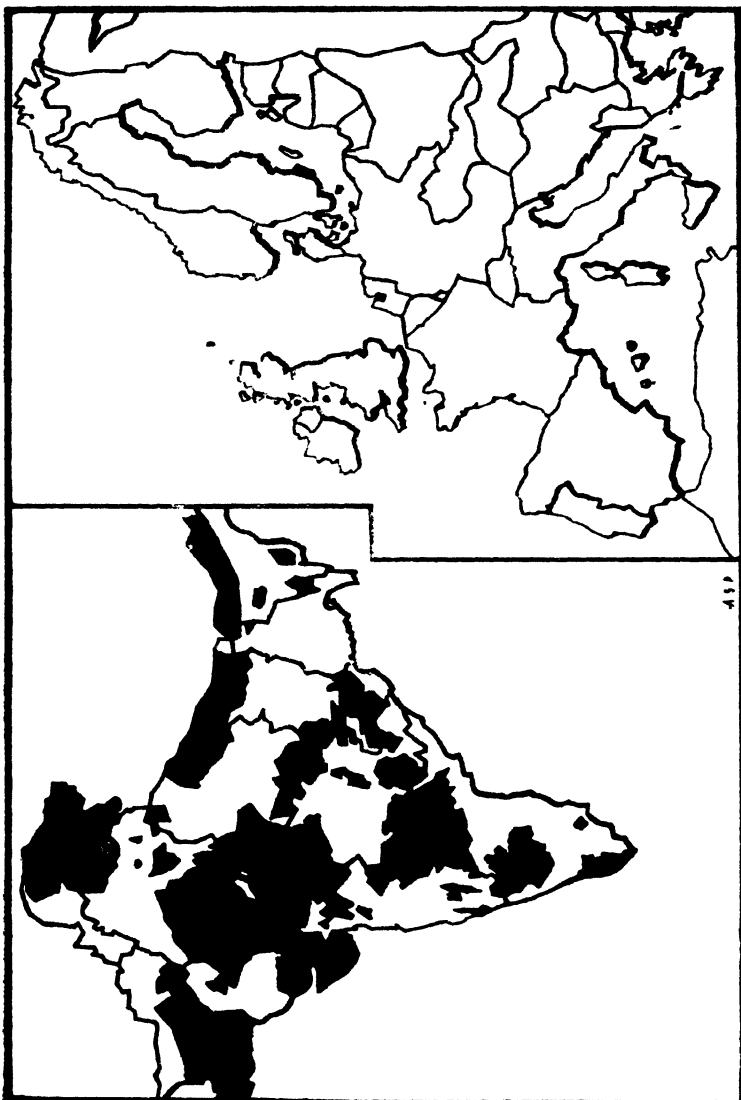


India over Europe—same scale.

differences may be as great. But here we must be careful. Just as we English may find it difficult to distinguish between Chinese and Japanese when we see them, or between a Chinese from Manchuria and his compatriot from Yunnan, so an Indian or a Chinaman might find it a problem to distinguish one *European* from another. The Indian villager would certainly lump all Europeans together, just as the English villager would think only in terms of "Indians," and not of Bengalis, Madrasis, Punjabis, Gujeratis, and so on. Both would be *almost* equally wrong, but perhaps not *quite* equally. India has, I think it may be said, *tended* to be a more homogeneous continent than Europe. Europe has, on the whole, fought and split and kept its internal distinctions more fanatically than India. India has known, under various dynasties, and especially under monarchs such as Asoka and Akhbar, something approaching unity for quite considerable periods. Europe has hardly ever known it. Without embarking on a long discussion of whys and wherefores, we can say that the 389 millions of India are more *sympathetic* to unity than the 500 millions of Europe. It does not at all follow that they are less differentiated. In India there are eleven Provinces, each speaking different languages (in some cases two or three), and five hundred and sixty-two princely States. In Europe there are 27 countries (this calculation depends, of course, on what you think of Hitler's claims), most of them smaller than Indian Provinces. Let us see what this looks like on similar-scale maps of Europe and India (see map opposite).

The Indian Princely States have been shaded, they cover an area (690,000 square miles) not much smaller than British India (886,000 square miles). Their population of 93 millions is, however, strikingly smaller than that of British India, which has 296 millions. You can deduce what you like from this: that it is sheer chance, or that British India is better run, or has better land, or that people don't care for living under Princes. But this first main division of India into Princely and British is important. There are 562 Princes or Princelings, ranging from the fairly enlightened and even to some extent constitutional rulers of Hyderabad or Mysore down to odd little Rajahs and Nawabs who own about as much territory as an English farmer. Some Princes, in deference to the times, have taken or are taking a few steps in the direction of democracy, but it must be admitted that they are on the whole extremely autocratic, and therefore, on the assumption either that this is, as Senator Wallace said, the "century of the common man," or that the day of small sovereignties is over, will not probably much longer survive. The States Peoples Conference, a body formed under the chairmanship of Nehru to win civil liberties for the people of the States, is one indication of the way that things are moving. Britain, however, is bound to the Princes by ancient treaties which guarantee their rights: they are *suzerains* deriving authority directly from the British Crown, of whom the Viceroy is the representative, and not coming under the Government of India.* It is easy to see that this raises awkward issues for a United or Federated

*For the benefit of those who may quarrel with this brief statement of the Princes' position, as it seems to me it actually is, I append a quotation from *India and Democracy* (page 126): "They did not form part of the Indian Empire, but neither were they sovereign powers. They were neither feudatories of the Government, nor protectorates, nor merely allies, and to explain their position there was invented the principle of paramountcy. This asserted, *tout court*, that the British Government was paramount in India, and as such had the right to intervene with the Princes. Normally the Crown guided



India and Europe--same scale Indian States are shaded. Nepal and Bhutan are shown within the Indian frontier

India Britain must either break her treaties or inveigle the Princes into a Federation. but as times move along and thrones become increasingly shaky, the Princes will cling more and more to an alien Power which maintains them while the pressure to abolish autocracy will become steadily greater. The Cripps proposals carried the following two clauses about the Princely States

1. Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution (that is, the Constitution to be framed by an elected body after the war), it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the new situation

2. Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole, and with the same powers as British Indian members

To these clauses the Congress Working Committee, replied

The complete ignoring of ninety millions of people in the Indian States, and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their Rulers, is a negation both of democracy and self-determination. While the representation of an Indian State in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the State have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken. Such States may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom, enclaves where foreign authority still prevails, and where the possibility of maintaining foreign-armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the States as well as of the rest of India.

It's a good thing to remember this princely split of India, because it is an issue which is likely to bulk larger in the future, and it played its part, though obscured by the question of defence, in the rejection of the Cripps proposals

Before leaving this subject, I shall quote a passage from Guy Wint's scholarly and dispassionate contribution to "India and Democracy"

"In some ways the India of the Princes presented a close parallel to Germany as it was before 1866. There was the same multitude of dynastic families. There was the same particularist sentiment. There were the same vested interests making for a continuation of the *status quo*. But at the same time there was the same growing pressure of economic forces, political convenience, and national feeling working increasingly for unity. And there was the same pull of a neighbour whose power was overwhelming and which represented the modern world and modern ideas of political organisation."

This then, as I see it, is the first great divide of India: the first because, although it does not at the moment rouse very acute feelings or violent controversy, it represents a tremendous obstacle to the constitution of a united India. The attitude of the present British Government, the

its behaviour towards the Princes by the letter of the treaties yet by virtue of paramountcy the Crown stood towards them as it were in a second and superior relation. But it must not be thought that they gained no advantage from their relations with the British Crown. On the contrary, but for these relations most of the dynasties would by now have perished. It is Great Britain which maintained them in being. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this meant protection against rival potentates. In the present century it has come to mean protection against the popular movements for their overthrow which may be organised in British India by the nationalist parties."

"loyalty" and "generosity" of the Princes in time of war, and the British respect for "treaties," all combine to obstruct change. Nothing could be surer than that the problem will be, and must be, solved by the eventual abolition of the Princes: but for how long their peculiar position may prevent any satisfactory federation, only circumstances and the growth of public opinion will show.

CHAPTER VII

The second great divide of India is, of course, the question of minorities in particular, the Muslim minority. It is an issue so controversial, so intimately Indian, and so delicate that I flinch from writing about it at all. I am not sure that any Englishman should dare to write about it. No Englishman can put himself in the place, or hope fully to grasp the associations of, a Muslim or Hindu. Yet no one who has the temerity to write about India can ignore the problem. Let us begin with a few simple and fairly unassailable facts. Hindu India has existed, as far as we know, for some three thousand years. Invading armies of Muslims from the north managed, more or less, to dominate *Northern* India from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. In this context two things must be remembered—first, that the invaders were to a great extent "absorbed" by India, and accepted at least a part of the cultural heritage of the land which they adopted (in other words, unlike the English, they "settled down" there), and secondly, that five hundred years in the long history of India is very much less than five hundred years would appear in our comparatively short one. But under Akbar, greatest of the Moghuls and a contemporary of our Elizabeth, India was practically united under Muslim rule. Akbar, besides being a strong man, was an aimful and broadminded one. He purposed giving India a single language, Urdu, the language of the camp, and, if possible, a single creed, a matter which he discussed endlessly with representatives of different religions and strove to exemplify by marrying four wives of different beliefs. The passage of such a figure must leave its mark on a people. Nevertheless, Hinduism itself was but little dented by the Great Moghuls, and survived to grow stronger under British occupation. Roughly speaking, it may be said that, just as the Muslims, having conquered India, were most likely to resent another conqueror, the British, so the conquered Hindus might see in a new aggression a means of bettering their lot. This may be putting it too strongly for the sake of illustration, just as it might be putting it too strongly to say that to-day the British are more hostile to the Japanese than are the conquered Indians: but a germ, at least, of truth is there. The Muslims preserve in their blood the pride of a conquering race: the Hindus the animosity of a conquered. The Muslims, when English education was offered to India, rejected it with scorn, preferring their own culture: the Hindus, embracing just something more in their all-embracing creed, rushed in, so to speak, to collar the Government jobs. Too late, the Muslims realised that they had, in the framework of the British Raj, become backward: and at the same time came the menace of a democratic set-up which would relegate them to the position of a permanent minority. Such factors by

themselves, and without allotting praise or blame to either side or even to a third party supposedly practising "divide-and-rule," are clearly sufficient to arouse jealousy and encourage faction.

The Muslims in India number ninety millions, the Hindus about three times that number. The Muslims are therefore, a "minority," and must remain so. It is questionable, I think, whether we do not misuse language, as well as befuddling ourselves and making a thorny problem even thornier, by applying that slightly disparaging word "minority" to a group of people twice as large as the population of Britain, and nine times as large as the population of Canada. Canada, now, would be a really small "minority" in a unified North American continent: and it's not a bad idea to have some such example in our minds when we speak of the Muslims. It is not impossible to envisage a fusion of Canada and the United States: the two peoples have a common language and religion, a not dissimilar outlook, are sprung from the same stock, have the same dress, customs and food, and intermarry freely. Yet, if Canada were faced by the rule of a Central American Legislature in which her representatives would be in a permanent minority of one to twelve, I cannot help thinking that she might hesitate. Might she not think that Americans would hold down all the best jobs in Canada, legislate for American rather than Canadian interests, and in course of time wipe out any vestige of Canadian tradition? If there is even a shred of truth in this supposition, where two very similar nations are concerned, how much more gravely would such considerations apply to Hindus and Muslims, separated as they are not only by the yawning abyss between two violently-opposed religions and by the enduring ban on intermarriage, but also by the whole web of customs, food, dress, associations, history and, to a great extent, language. Is it not fairly reasonable that Muslims should look with dismay on a future in which Hindus would be for ever the majority, and in which it would be *possible*—we need not consider at the moment whether it would be *probable*—for the majority influence to be so pervasive that Muslim language and culture would die away, and Muslims might gradually be relegated to a low place in the continuing caste system of the Hindus? Add to this the fact that a third party, the British, resented as alien conquerors by Hindu and Muslim alike, hold the scales in this matter, and undoubtedly offer, or seem to offer, a greater "protection" to Muslim interests than would be offered—unless the Muslims reconquered India by force—by a Hindu majority. Such, very broadly, is the issue as it might appear to a Muslim who is proud of his history and culture, and determined that they shall not be lost.

Every picture depends on the ability, spirit, mood and intention of the artist who paints it. My picture, as I have so far painted it, is crude and gloomy. It is nevertheless a picture which many Muslims would consider just. But let us paint another. A very great number of Indians—not only the followers of Congress (who may risk the suspicion of desiring a permanent Congress and mainly Hindu domination), but also Moderates who desire, Indian unity no less—will tell you that the communal problem simply does not exist, and that it is an artificial split fostered (for divide-and-rule reasons) by the British, and carried on by a few fanatical followers of Islam. I have listened very often, and I hope attentively, to these people, and I wish most earnestly that I could accept their view. It is true, I think, that circumstances are working *towards* that view. Religious feeling and prejudice are *tending* to die out among the you

people of India there is a growing sense of *national* unity, arising both from the increased nationalism of other countries and the threat from outside India habits, customs and language move inevitably, through swifter communications, radio, the cinema, etc. *towards* amalgamation. It is true that the levelling effect of poverty must *tend*, even if very slowly, towards a unification of customs and manners among the 89% of India's population who live in her 700,000 villages and that in urban areas both the impact of Western ideas and the congestion of industry must have a similar effect. It is true that Gandhi and Nehru, and even Azad and Mrs. Naidu, in the Congress camp, are not only more popular figures, but also far closer to the Indian tradition of the warrior-saint leader, than is the Europeanized lawyer, Jinnah. And it is true that Congress has the allegiance of many Muslims, while the Muslim League, led by Jinnah, is scarcely likely to recruit Hindus. Above all, it is true that both Hindus and Muslims, whatever their differences, have one great aim in common—the freedom of India from alien domination.

But, when all this has been said, a problem remains. However much an Englishman may shrink from the accusation of "exploiting," or simply exaggerating, the internal differences of India, it is idle to shirk the issue. The report of the Joint Select Committee contains this passage: "Parliamentary Government, as it is understood in the United Kingdom, is based essentially on the principle of majority rule, and majority rule is not a principle of government, unless the minority for the time being are willing to acquiesce in the decisions of the majority." And a man as cautious as Sir George Schuster can write "Broadly, then, it seems clear that a system of parliamentary democracy such as that which has been developed and worked hitherto in England (essentially on a two-party basis) is not likely to be suited to India's needs—certainly not for the Central or Federal Government, and probably not for the Provinces either." It cannot, I think, be denied that a group of ninety million people, wherever and whoever they may be, will be "unwilling to acquiesce in the decisions of" a majority which is *perpetual*, and has a different culture and religion. And it is worth taking the instance of Canada again to illustrate this. The fusion of the French-speaking province of Quebec with the English province of Ontario produced a complete deadlock. It was not until they were again divided into separate legislative units, and then united in a federation with other provinces, that stable government could be maintained. But the differences, or, to give it a better word, the distinctions, were also maintained. And I do not think that any Indian Congressman would deny that Muslims, at any rate for the present, would desire, and have to be permitted, to maintain their own religion and culture. The only real question, therefore, which remains is—would they be *able* to do so under any form of government which assured a permanent majority to people of a different creed and different customs?

It is quite impossible to answer that question. It would be very much easier to decide, say, whether Canada would benefit if it were federated with America, or whether British Labour would have a square deal if it came under a *perpetual* Conservative majority. If we look at the problem thus, two points emerge. It is not necessary to assume, because we are habituated to a party system in which one Government can be supplanted by another, that a perpetual majority would *necessarily* be silly enough to cause itself continual headaches by perpetually estranging a *large* section of its people: in other words, America might conceivably treat

Canada very well, and Conservatives might not want to grind the faces of the poor—although Canada and the poor, like the Muslims, might feel that the dice would be loaded against them. Secondly, a third over-riding party, *in any such case*, would fog the issue and make agreement almost impossible in other words, supposing that Russia dominated both America and Canada, and refused them freedom until such time as they "agreed" about their federation, it is pretty certain that common aims would be lost sight of in intrigues by both sides to get the best of the bargain, although America, as numerically superior, would have less qualms than Canada about the future. Just so the Indian Congress, being undoubtedly the strongest party with the largest following, is impatient with the Muslim demand for a guarantee against a perpetual majority, a demand which, in the Congress view, unnecessarily cuts across the main issue of freedom from alien domination. The Muslims, not less bent on freedom from British rule, feel nevertheless that they cannot put their signature to a document which *may* relegate them to a perpetual domination no better, and perhaps worse, than that of Britain. They have therefore taken up the idea of "Pakistan," a group of independent Muslim states within India itself.

"Pakistan" may be translated as "The Holy Land" or may be taken to represent the initial letters of the areas which it would include—the Punjab, Afghanistan (that is, the North-West Frontier), Kashmir, and Sind. It would also presumably include Bengal, which has a high proportion of Muslims, and would be affiliated with Hyderabad and other Muslim States. If you look at it on a map it will be seen that the first four, at least, represent a reasonably good geographical entity, and that they lead on to the idea of a Pan-Islamic Federation which would stretch from Delhi to Constantinople and Cairo. It is not unnatural that Muslims, if Islamic culture in India is threatened, should tend to look beyond India's frontiers and associate themselves with the great Mohammedan groups of the Middle East. Now that science is making geographical frontiers less and less important, it is not fantastic to imagine a regrouping of peoples which would ignore the Himalayas, create a great Islamic federation north of Delhi, and leave the Hindus in possession of the south. But such regrouping seems highly unlikely. It is suggested here only because it is a factor which may play a certain part in the *attitude* of the Muslims of India. And Pakistan itself, as it has so far been mooted, is clearly a somewhat muddled project. Economic facts, the general tendency towards large groupings, and the lack of homogeneity even in the areas concerned, all go against it. But it does not at all follow that, in an independent India, the ninety million Muslims should have no "place of their own." I know that many Indians will say at once that India itself would be "their place": therefore, let us look at the views expressed by some Indian leaders. First, Mr. Rajagopalachari, ex-Premier of Madras, who resigned from the Congress Working Committee over this very problem. "Rajaji," as he's generally known, said when he addressed the Committee:

"Let us dare in this matter. Let us give to Muslims what they have been asking. It is mere shadow. They will themselves say they do not want it, if you do not keep it in your pocket, but throw it on the table. The Muslims say they must understand that their future is safe. It is no use arguing and telling the Muslims that Pakistan is not good for them. Suppose you wanted to catch a train, and when you start from your

house your child wants to sit in the front seat. It is no use arguing with him and telling him that that seat had been promised to a friend. You will be quite all right in your reasoning, but you will miss the train. If you are wise, you will let the child sit on the front seat, and go and catch the train."

"My proposition is to tell the Muslims: We are not going to coerce you. If it is made clear that the Muslims are entitled to self-determination and to the form of Government they wanted in predominantly Muslim areas, there is a basis of approach. Can we afford to have a divided people in this country? The Delhi resolution has said that the Working Committee (of Congress) could not think of compelling people in a territorial unit to remain in the Indian Union against their declared and established will. Gandhi has declared (in the *Harijan*) that if the vast majority of the Muslims regarded themselves as a separate nation, no power on earth could compel them to think otherwise. The ghost of Pakistan is not going to kill you. The people of the Punjab are living in an area predominantly Muslim, and they are still alive and kicking. Pakistan is only a ghost, and I want to grasp it by the beard and face it" (*Hindustan Times*, Sunday, May 3, 1942.)

Those are the words of an Indian Nationalist statesman of long experience. His resolution on that occasion was thrown out by the Congress Working Committee by 120 votes to 15. That, no doubt, was chiefly due to the fact that Rajaji had not toed the party line.* Replying to him Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Congress and himself a Muslim, said

"Rajaji has put his point of view before us. He believes that Congress-League differences are harmful to the cause of the country and should be ended. On this, I say there could not be two opinions in this House. We also feel the same way. But Rajaji's method is wrong and would harm the very cause which he is advocating. It is not a question of somebody putting up a demand and our conceding it. As I have said, the correct procedure would be to nominate representatives and to discuss the questions involved. Even now I am willing to call the Working Committee and ask them to nominate five representatives to meet five representatives of the Muslim League to find a settlement."

"I met Mr. Jinnah twice. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru corresponded with him, and Gandhiji also met Mr. Jinnah. Gandhiji did his best. Then an impossible situation was sprung on us. We were faced with two preliminary premises—first, our history of the past 50 years or so was to be obliterated and the Congress was to reduce itself to a Hindu body only:

"I do not want to risk giving an unfair impression about the Congress. I should entirely subscribe to Shelvankar's extremely able summary: "The Congress is not a Hindu body. It is bitterly attacked by the Mahasabha, the Hindu communal organisation. Yet a distinctly Hindu atmosphere pervades the Congress. It is no orthodox Hinduism. It is impatient of social abuses, and under Gandhi's leadership has been foremost in fighting them, especially untouchability. Many Congressmen have pronounced Hindu sympathies, and the phraseology at Congress meetings, the songs and prayers, constantly call attention to the link between Hinduism and the Congress. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Congress is non-sectarian. It is the most important non-communal, purely political, and democratic organisation in the country. It commands unrivalled prestige and authority, and is stronger by far than any communal organisation." Cf. also Gandhi: "It is a travesty of truth to abuse the Congress by calling it a Hindu or a communal organisation. It is national in the fullest sense of the term. It is a purely political organisation... Its gains belong not merely to itself, but to the whole nation irrespective of caste or creed or race." According to Shelvankar, Congress membership in 1939 was six millions.

secondly, we were to recognise the claim that the Muslim League was the sole representative of Muslims. These premises were impossible and nothing could be achieved with them . . . I declare that those who had the reins of the Muslim League in their hands built up an impenetrable wall against the Congress . . . Pakistan is against the spirit of Islam. The details have not been clarified. The whole thing has been kept vague. In a case like this, of what is a responsible organisation like ours to take note?" (*Hindustan Times*, May 3.)

Now these words, though they may be justified and statesmanlike, are not exactly a noble interpretation of freedom. They are more of the order of British "conditioned offers" than of that unconditioned freedom which Congress claims, and which one might expect it also to give. Still, they do appear to leave a door open for negotiation. Now listen to Mr. Jinnah, a month later

"Muslim India will never submit to a unitary or united self-government for all India taken as a single unit, as that will immediately bring the north-western and eastern zones (the Muslim homelands, where Mussalmans are in a majority) entirely under the yoke of Hindus . . . We have had enough experience of the Provincial Constitution for 27 months when the Congress-Hindu majority . . . enjoyed certain legislative, administrative and executive powers . . . The Hindu Congress in six provinces during those 27 months made every effort to suppress the language, customs and culture of the Mussalmans. Even in educational institutions which were wholly Muslim the students were compelled to use text-books prescribed by the Hindu Congress Governments emphasising Hindu culture and traditions and belittling those of the Mussalmans."

"The difference between the Hindus and Muslims is deeprooted and ineradicable. We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilisation, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions: in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law, we are a nation. What (the Congress) want is, as I have said, hegemony, supremacy and domination over all, and that they want to establish with the help and, presumably, with the ultimate sanction of British bayonets." (*Hindu*, Saturday, July 4, 1942.)

Here we have come down into the arena: here speaks the demagogue. here, even, there is an echo of Hitler. Listen now to the voice of Nehru:

"In regard to Mr. Rajagopalachari's suggestion, so far as I am concerned and I believe so far as Congressmen are concerned, we would willingly meet Mr. Jinnah if that serves the cause we have at heart. But obviously such a meeting can only be profitable if there is a common subject to discuss on which there is a measure of basic agreement . . . For instance, there is no particular point in our discussing Pakistan because we have no common ground on that issue, but it would be very much to the point to discuss the means of achieving independence for India or, to put it differently, the means of eliminating foreign authority from India, and leaving ourselves to determine our problems without foreign interference. If that can be a common basis, Mr. Jinnah can certainly hold his opinion about Pakistan, and I shall continue to hold my opinion in opposition to it." (*Hindu*, Thursday, June 18, 1942.)

Nehru is, of course, one of the most delightful, endearing and brilliant human beings in this world—but could anything be more guaranteed to enrage? Greatly as I admire Nehru, and his achievements and integrity and great-heartedness, greatly as I rage against the British travesty of fair play which puts him in jail, much as I sympathise with Muslim apprehensions, and admire Jinnah's stand, I could cheerfully knock those two damned clever heads together.

Nehru said to Jinnah,

"Oh, won't you come to dinner?"

—But Pakistan, of course, will be taboo".

Jinnah said to Nehru,

"Do you really think we fear you?"

It's Pakistan for us, or nowt for you."

There, undoubtedly, yawns a gulf. I have not sought to minimise it. To do so would be as unwise as it was unwise to ignore the problems of Czecho-Slovakia or Spain. To face it squarely is not thereby to exclude all hope of solution: not, above all, to justify the theory that, until the two communities agree, India must be denied freedom, and England will be justified in domination. In what human community of four hundred million people, or forty million, or four, has there ever been complete absence of dissension? Must Indians be unborn undreamed-of angels, or mindless idiots, to win freedom only by being all of one mind? And that leads directly to the question—the *reductio ad absurdum*, if you like—what if they were? What if the whole of India declared with no dissentient voice that they would practise non-violence under Gandhi, or fight with Japan under Bose, or fight for their own independence under Jinnah? Then the argument would be—and we have already heard something like it about the Congress "High Command"—that this isn't democracy but totalitarianism, and totalitarian India could not be free. British statesmen in fact—if it is admitted that there is no hypocrisy in their "desire to see India free"—would be as unwilling to free an authoritarian India, an India united under one man or one party, as they are to free a divided one. In other words, what they really demand is an India conforming exactly to Westminster: a sprawling continent of sharply differentiated races and religions adopting *in toto* a Parliamentary system governed by concepts and conventions built up over a thousand years in a small homogeneous Western island. And here, perhaps, lies the core of the difficulties which beset, and are likely always to beset, British attempts, however well-meant, to "solve the communal problem." It is a problem entirely alien to British thought and tradition: as alien, say, as might be an American business man's attempt to supervise the choice of a Dalai Lama, or the canvassing of an English bye-election by Premier Stalin.

Those who ardently desire to see a free India, British and Indian alike, naturally desire—and indulge in wishful thinking about—a speedy and final solution of the communal problem. But it seems highly doubtful whether that problem is likely to be solved either by trying to apply to it some form of government which has happened to suit a quite different people, or by endeavouring to impose coercive fusions such as were applied to Europe at Versailles, or, for that matter, to Europe by Hitler now. Europe in any case is not very sharply differentiated in religion and custom: though perhaps, if an analogy is needed, one is bound to point out that the Vatican is not likely to regard Russian atheism, real or

fancied, with any favour. If the Roman Catholic Church, believed itself to be seriously menaced in a federated Europe dominated by a fiercely atheistic Russia, we should have something not totally unlike the Indian communal problem. Would the result be war? Would the situation justify the domination of Europe by Japan? Far-fetched as such an analogy may seem, it is not numerically, spatially, or emotionally so very different from India. And with the communal problem we are in the realm of emotion and prejudice on a colossal scale. It will not vanish at the wave of a White Paper. Maybe, and indeed probably, it will not vanish at all within any period for which we can now legislate. If that is so, if the basic religious and cultural cleavage between Hinduism and Islam is such that each community fears and mistrusts the domination or separatism of the other, one thing at least is certain—no solution can be found along British democratic lines. That is to say, any Parliamentary set up of elected representatives for the whole of India must inevitably bring us to one of two *culs-de-sac*: the permanent domination of a religious and racial majority, or the permanent over-representation of a powerful racial and religious minority. Thus, thinking exclusively in terms of British institutions, we fall very easily into a belief that the communal problem is insoluble, and the British Raj must continue. It is Hugh Walpole's book again: they are "happier with us."

To demolish this argument is not at all easy, because it is not so much an argument as a faith. Those who sincerely believe that British methods and British justice and what they like to call "the presence of a third party as impartial arbitrator" really offer the best hope of a slow peaceable settlement cannot be wholly condemned. They are really, by implication, denying that Indian freedom is possible at all: what they have in mind is such modification of the existing system as may be inevitable, but not, in any event, the cessation of the British connection. And it must be said that in denying Indian freedom in this way they are in the same—or at any rate a very similar—boat as Congress, which denies separate freedom to the Muslims, or the Muslim League, which put its own freedom before that of India. British, Congress and Muslim diehards hold, in effect, that their own particular brand of freedom is the only one that will do: and this is an article of faith. On the other hand, the belief of those who hold that the domination of an Eastern country by white overlords, and the use of force and violence in upholding that domination, are things which must be blown away by this war as surely as Nazism, has at least equal merit, and seems nearer in spirit to the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the ideas for which this war, by all accounts, is being fought. If indeed we "*respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they live, and wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them,*" then any case which, no matter how plausible, supports the perpetuation of British rule in India, must fall to the ground. And it falls with all the bigger thud because the old excuses of "after the war"—"presently"—"when Indians have decided on a constitution"—have now worn so thin that you can see right through them.

The British people cannot impose an agreement or a constitution on the people of India. No matter what our "responsibilities" may seem, or our vested interests may be, or the war may appear to demand, that is the central ineluctable fact. All the expensive and barren results of Round Table Conferences and Simon Commissions and Government of India

Acts and Cripps missions are destined to vanish in smoke That is doubtless a pity, as they are probably well-meant But they are as vain as an attempt to induce a convinced vegetarian, by means of an enormous expenditure on films and diagrams and lectures and tests, that meat is good for him, and finally, in a frenzy of exasperation (because you really do think that meat is essential) to cram him full of beefsteak British Parliamentary methods, built up over generations of English thought and custom, no more fit India than they fit China and Russia; and our able lawyers and statesmen are always shinning madly and doggedly and perseveringly up the wrong tree, because it is an English tree *

It is extremely difficult to face this fact, because India seems to be part of the Empire, and we fall into easy and misleading comparisons with other Dominions or peoples of British or European stock But it may well be that the mind and outlook of an Indian is as different, and as difficult to change, as the colour of our respective skins It may be that Indians, left free to decide their own internal problems, might not prove incapable of doing so It may be that our self-allocated divine right to plan India is really a spanner in the works It may even be that the solution of the communal problem is, quite simply, the cessation of British interference in it

That, again, is difficult to accept Indeed, why write about it at all, if you are not putting forward a "plan" The answer is that "plans" for the East by the West just don't work all our reforms and Round Table Conferences have got us nowhere, and we are back, as near as makes no matter, in the atmosphere of the Mutiny I, as an Englishman, gladly concede that I have no right whatsoever to write about India more, that I do so apologetically and badly yet I feel forced, under present circumstances, to throw what tiny weight I can into the balance against the immense tonnage of sound, logical argument which insists that Britain must plan for India Let Britain plan for herself, by all means God knows she will find the Beveridge scheme controversial enough, even among her own tiny and homogenous population But to claim that she must plan for a population ten times as great and varied whose beliefs and habits and character are as alien to her own as three thousand

*Cf. Guv Wint "Of quite especial interest is the system in Mysore This was the first Indian State to introduce popular assemblies of the western type, but the assembly once planted has developed along lines of its own, and its atmosphere and procedure are to-day quite different from the legislatures of British India To attend one of its sessions is to feel that it is an institution which fits the people like a glove, and the observer cannot help but contrast its vivacity and homeliness with the sense of constraint, artificiality, and almost of play-acting which are seldom absent from the assemblies of British India" (*India and Democracy*), p. 129).

Cf. also Sir George Shuster "The more the Indian position is studied, the more clearly does it seem to emerge that some focus for personal loyalty is needed as well as some impartial arbitral authority It seems further to be clear that this function must be embodied in a personality which can be regarded as standing for the interests of the whole nation rather than as one whose position depends on votes which might be votes of a majority composed mainly of one political party or community" (*India and Democracy*, p. 378)

Cf. also Thompson and Garratt "Young India, like young everywhere, is moving away from politics of a constitutional kind It must be doubtful whether a rigid Federation can long survive without great economic and social changes which would normally precede rather than follow the establishment of such an immense democratic organisation Possibly the future will see a number of almost autonomous units each developing along its own lines and merely sacrificing a measure of its sovereignty to a body like a miniature League of Nations Whatever the future may hold, the direct influence of the West upon the East is likely to decrease" (*Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, page 652)

years of widely different traditions and associations can make them—that is to claim a white man's burden which India can thankfully do without. The premise running through British policy that Indians are incapable of planning their own country simply because they have been subjugated for a century and a half and because they have a tough problem of races and religions to deal with is mischievous and false. A century and a half of domination does not give the dominating power a right—or an ability—to plan. An Indian National Government will, it may without much difficulty be assumed, do its best for India, and understand India rather better than an alien government: whether it will choose monarchic or republican symbols, close unity or loose federation, or some quite unwestern combination of separatist states, can only become clear as and when the spirit of India is free to function.

That the communal question can be and should be left to Indians will be denied by British authorities on three main grounds, i.e.:

1. Indians are not "responsible," and quarrel hopelessly among themselves.
2. The British cannot in decency leave India if the result is going to be civil war.
3. Any kind of internal strife in India would have an adverse effect on the war effort.

These assumptions, logical as they may seem, are of doubtful validity. The first flight of Indian politicians is of a mental calibre not inferior to that of politicians in any country: he would be a bold man who prophesied that the deeds and writings of a Churchill, Roosevelt or Stalin would outweigh and outlast in the minds of men those of Gandhi and Nehru. A different outlook is not necessarily a stupid one: and the fundamental internal differences of India are not greater than similar differences amongst similarly large populations in Europe, or even let us say, the United Nations. To presume civil war in our absence is to rationalise our presence: to say in fact that, like Hugh Walpole's book, the Muslims and Hindus are "happier with us"—which is rubbish. To say that internal dissension would lose India to the Japanese is a red herring: in the first place, it is exceedingly doubtful—to me impossible—that disunion, once Indians were given full responsibility, would take precedence over the unity needed to hold off the common aggressor: second, even if the Japanese overran half India, an India freed and finding its soul through such a struggle would pay far better dividends to the United Nations than ever will accrue from the hostility and sullen resentment of a dominated country.

The answer to the communal question is possibly so simple that, like the Sermon on the Mount, it is not acceptable. A mass of facts and figures to prove that Hindus or Muslims should have just that much ground, and that much representation, and that much power, would, I know, be far more acceptable to the thought-processes of our age, which insist on a rational tying-up of every international parcel. But rational tying-up is certainly not an Indian method: and the rational tying-up of Europe at Versailles was not markedly successful. No politician, writer or reformer has yet, so far as I know, produced a "plan" which would satisfy all Indian minorities and it is thus possible to assume one of three things—that Indian unity is an idle dream, that the time for Indian unity has not come, or that Indian unity is prevented by the domination of an alien power which is bound by its presence and purpose to foster disunity.

There is a germ of truth in all three. Indian unity is probably a dream in our sense, in the sense of a rigid constitutional framework of unity imposed by the might of a power outside India and the time for Indian unity has not come, because the healthy growth of national unity and self-government has been thwarted and embittered by alien rule; domination, while it has inflamed nationalism, has also encouraged dissension.

Every group or nation needs its symbols of unity—the flag and the national anthem, the king, the president, the state. It is significant that only the Congress, in India, has produced such symbols. The Congress flag and Bande Mataram already stand for something. Similarly, Gandhi stands, as no one else comes within a million miles of standing, as the symbol of the Indian: he is the true priest-king. And he also stands, through the Congress, in the direct line of those who have represented for the past sixty years India's desire for freedom, as well as her poverty and, if you like, her fatalism. Had he chosen also to be the warrior-king, he might well have fused Indian nationalism into a violence which would have driven out the West. But his way was different. And because it was different the martial races and the westernised elements drifted away from it. The reunion of the two, the saint and the warrior, the spiritual and the material, is the point at which India's real unity might begin. But to that reunion we can contribute only the circumstances in which it would be possible.

Whatever they are, they are certainly not the imprisonment of Gandhi and the Congress leaders. They are not repressive measures smacking of totalitarianism. They are not British ready-made charters for Indian minds. They are not the refusal of permission to a mediator—Rajagopalachari—even to visit Gandhi. They are not a "Security Corps" which arrests without warrant. There are two ways of dealing with Indian minorities: one is to "safeguard" them with British guns the other is to let Indians work out the problem for themselves. If it is to be the first, then our domination of India must be perpetual, and all our "promises" are so much eyewash: if it is to be the second, we need waste no time about transferring power to a National Government. Neither a National Government nor any other can hope—any more than any Government in any country—to satisfy every minority and silence every criticism. It is hypocrisy to pretend that such a Utopia is a practical aim. But it is only a National Government, and not an alien Government, nor as we have seen, an exterior symbol such as the League of Nations, which can undertake the task of nation-building. Communalism in India cannot be expected, under any kind of Government, to disappear overnight: the point, however, is that it cannot even begin to disappear, but must rather increase and fester, so long as a dominating power, dangling a conditioned freedom, encourages each minority to howl for its "rights." The gulfs between the parties can be bridged only by agreement, and never by "safeguards": that agreement must spring from the Indian people themselves, however long and tedious the process may be, and however different the final result from the British notion of unity. The communal differences of India can only be solved as and when a focal point for All-Indian loyalty exists: it does not yet exist: it cannot exist when all discussion between the parties is suspended. "It is," as Sir Stafford Cripps said in his broadcast to India on March 30, 1942, "for you, the Indian people, to discuss and decide upon your future constitution. We shall look on with deep interest and hope that your wisdom will guide you."

truly in this great adventure." Brave words: and could their promise have been fulfilled in the spirit and the letter, no more need have been said. But over that, as over other promises, India, like Macbeth, could say:

And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
That palter with us in a double sense,
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.

CHAPTER VIII

The third great divide of India is the divide between spiritualism and materialism.

India has a reputation for Holy men and Wisdom those who go there seeking them and find instead a great number of corpulent babus, some shimmering cocktail-drinking Princes, and not a few astute and unscrupulous business men piling up colossal fortunes, are apt to rush to the opposite extreme, and to declare that Indians are grossly material. So, indeed, a great many Indians are. The average Englishman is lucky if, in the whole course of his life in India, he meets, even superficially, more than five or six thousand Indians. Five or six hundred would be nearer the mark for most. If all these are grossly material, it does not prove anything about four hundred million people what it more likely proves is that materially-minded Indians have learnt their attitude from the Europeans whom they surround. Yet even the most materially-minded Indian lives, compared with a European, in staggering simplicity. He may entertain you to the most sumptuous banquets at a hotel, or even in a palace of his own furnished by Maples or Mrs Sutherland at colossal expense the chances are that, so far as his personal possessions and private life are concerned, he differs remarkably little from the villager at the other end of the vast Indian scale. The charpoy or string bed, the dhoti or ajkan, the delightful and fantastically cheap slippers or sandals, the huqqa, the floor to sit on, rice to eat and water to drink—that is the list of his requirements. And this is not by any means to infer that his life is a poor or uncomfortable one. Company and conversation in the evening on an Indian housetop, while the owner whistles to his pigeons wheeling above, or with ground-glass-coated kite-string endeavours to cut loose his neighbour's kite, is as delightful as any human society can be. True, the addlepated Maharajah, the *nouveau-riche*, and the wealthy youngster can throw themselves with fantastic extravagance on Western toys, and dazzle both themselves and you with the sleekest motor-cars and the largest radiograms—but it always seemed to me that they connected themselves very little with such things, and were far more indifferent to them than is a Westerner. One Prince had 86 wireless sets in one room, and an unpleasant habit of turning them all on at once. When asked, on one occasion, to get the B B C. news, he transmitted the order to his tame mechanic, who failed to do so, and was instantly sacked. Another had built a miniature special train for his 200 dogs? "these," he said, pointing to some particularly ugly mongrels, "are the Congress Working Committee: they go third." And one of the most endearing young Indians I ever met had a car which could do 100 m.p.h. *in reverse*.

"But why," I asked him, "100 m.p.h. in reverse?" "Oh—it startles people," he said *Epater les bourgeois* is quite a natural reaction for an Indian ruled by Mr. Smith from Tooting. But I am quite sure that Mr. Q would have been completely unmoved had his car been lost or stolen or destroyed. It was to me one of the most notable things in Indian life to observe how untouched is even the richest Indian by that sense of possession and acquisitiveness which advertisement has bred in the European and which in its turn has bred in him jealousy, competitiveness, envy and war. The miracle of India—and believe me, in this modern world it is a miracle—is that Indians can do without all our European "gifts" to-morrow, and be not one whit less happy. Bless them for it, and may they long so continue!

For is not acquisitiveness a fatal disease of Western civilisation? More and more it seems that the grim struggle to outdo one's neighbour, fostered and inflamed by advertisement, vested interests, and all the persuasive paraphernalia of "creating a demand to meet the supply," is the very root of our troubles. It is not the monopoly of the rich: it is rather, in fact, from the poor that the cry for a new hat or sofa or a better wall-paper than Mrs. Jones' comes most loudly. Naturally: for in this race for possessions the poor have a lot of leeway to make up. But how appalling is the vista of a civilisation in which the crowning rewards of man's endeavour are Bentley cars and radios and fur coats. Such a civilisation must inevitably fight its neighbours for a division of the spoils. More than that, it destroys itself by other means than war: it has been calculated by experts, who have so far been justified in their predictions, that in less than 90 years from now the population of Britain will have been reduced from 46 millions to 4, and that other European countries, with the significant exception of Russia, will follow suit. * An acquisitive society, bent on the display of possessions, cannot afford the luxury of children: that is why Britain to-day has *two million* fewer children under fourteen than it had in the last war, and *two million more dogs*. Dogs, like furniture, can be a subject for bragging: children are apt to be expensive and troublesome. So we gather possessions and must give our very lives—or the lives of our young people—to keep them: and we think that we have a right to dictate the constitution of India, doubtless in line with Lady Astor's remark: "I would like China and Russia to be in the framework of a new society formed by America and the British Commonwealth, *but they would have to get into the 'British way of thinking'*" (*News-Chronicle*, October, 1942).

In 1937 I called on Mr. Rajagopalchari, then Prime Minister of Madras, in order to obtain his collaboration, or at least his blessing, for the establishment of two radio stations in that province. Our conversation developed into an argument about the merits of Eastern and Western Civilization. Rajaji, in fact, would have none of me or my wireless. (I must add that, later, he did very charmingly inaugurate the two stations.) His personality and remarks so much impressed me that I went back to my hotel and wrote down the whole interview, as far as I could remember it. Rajaji started by saying that India wanted none of our Western science, and that broadcasting was entirely foreign to Indian life, because the personal touch was essential. Irritated, I pointed out that he had a telephone on his desk and that he had come to the office in a car: that,

moreover, India had an admitted lack of good teachers, and to those that there were radio could give an enormously larger audience: and that personalities could be quite personal on the microphone. "I doubt it," said Rajaji, "and I distrust your machines. And look at the expense. And the hurry. Why are you in such a *hurry* to put up all these stations everywhere, to make everybody buy radio sets?" I didn't much like this, because I had no real answer, except that I was "getting on with my job": so I said: "But you can't resist the impact of Western civilization: radio has got to come, like the train and the telephone." Rajaji tapped irritably on his desk and said, "Your Western civilization! What does it matter to us? Don't you see that your Western nations are going to destroy themselves? More and more and more, the multiplication of everything—that is your motto, and that is what we dislike. It will destroy you."

The record of that interview has remained not only on paper, but also very much in my mind. More and more, and more of everything. It is what the socialists as well as the capitalists of the west are forever saying. More and more of everything material, more ships and more aeroplanes and more guns: more radios and more motor-cars and more houses and more bath-rooms: more, more, more! And, of course, more war. How could it be otherwise? The man who wants more than his neighbour, not simply for comfort, but for the sake (as the advertisements, as well as the structure of society, shriek at him) of being *better* dressed, *more* grandly housed, *more* delicately fed, *more* luxuriously transported, must inevitably subtract from the sum total and despoil his neighbour for his own aggrandisement. Ah!—but I am not preaching some grey equality: equality is not in Nature, and regimented equality is the most dismal of man's conceptions: neither has it anything whatever to do with the Sermon on the Mount or the thirteenth chapter of the epistle to the Corinthians. Man does not live by bread alone—but how near has western civilization now come to thinking that he does! But not the Indian. The Indian is concerned far more—or so it seemed, over and over again, to me—with religion, beliefs and ideas than with material possessions. That is why he is still—until we overwhelm him with our advertisements, our dividends, our technocracy, our "output"—in a spiritually stronger position than we are: that is why India in the present paroxysm of acquisitive society, is not only an incalculable factor, but potentially, at any rate, a tougher one than Europe.

The representative of spiritual India—which does not mean orthodox-religious India—is Gandhi. and the character of Gandhi is as puzzling as the fourth dimension. Is he saint or politician or both? Is he, as some think, nearer to Christ and Christ's teachings than anyone else in this modern materialistic fighting world, or is he, as others hold, an impishly adroit Machiavelli using Christianity as a tool? How far does he really represent India, and India's future?

Such questions can only be answered, at present, according to the opinions, prejudices and temperament of individuals: history will in time provide less controversial replies. Here I can only put down the effect of Gandhi on one person—myself. I first met him at Delhi—or rather, in the little brick house, verandah below, tiny room with outside staircase above, erected for him in the Congress encampment far outside the limits of the pillared Imperial city. I had asked the Government of India permission to go and see him, and they had refused it: I went, thinking

myself rather gracious to do so. I was therefore rebuffed when Mrs. Naidu, after raising her thick eyebrows mockingly at me and asking "Come to see our Mickey Mouse?" led me to a verandah on which Gandhi, surrounded by a semi-circle of admirers, was standing, and proceeded to hand me a note which read, "Glad to see you, but this is my Silence Day: you can talk, I can't."

Gandhi beamed at me as I read it, and I disliked him instantly. To start with, I felt idiotic and wished I hadn't come: secondly, with devotees standing around, I was embarrassed. I rushed angrily into a torrent of words, and said that I should return the next day. Gandhi beamed and nodded. I went away cross. The next evening I went up the tiny staircase and found him lying on a thin mat, with a hurricane lamp beside him. He looked at me through his spectacles, kicked his thin legs in the air, and said, "I know your type—milk-and-water liberal: you should return to England: this country is an armed camp, and you must be on one side or the other." I said that I didn't want to be: my job in broadcasting was to remain neutral, and get the best of both sides. "Then," he said, "both will throw stones at you."

That was true enough. I felt ruffled nevertheless. Gandhi, it was clear would not move an inch to help me, and did not think much of me. Quite naturally, I didn't think much of him. But as time went on, and I grew to know—or think I knew—just a little more about India, and about him, and felt my western standards increasingly challenged, I began to feel a certain admiration for the indomitable little man. When next I saw him, I said: "Do you still think I am wrong to stay?" He said: "I leave it to you to decide whether you are satisfied with a job which you hold only by virtue of the guns behind you." I talked to him then about non-violence, saying irritably—I was in an irritable frame of mind—that it was all very well for him to sit in a hut and propound impossible Utopias, but we had to get on with the daily, practical business of life. He said: "My way is the right way: whether it takes ten or twenty or fifty generations to achieve it is not my concern: I can only try." He was tired and discouraged then, lying on a bed after a long fast, and seeming little more than wizened body and piercing eyes. I found it impossible to believe that he was not absolutely sincere: and he drew my affection and respect.

I met him next as he strode, staff in hand, along the silver beach at Juhu, the calm, sunlit sea beside him, palms whispering above. He was robust and gay again, his seventy years sitting lightly on him. I asked him—"Don't you bless my work yet?" He twinkled at me and said: "Of course I bless it, and you." I said, "But why not do a little more than that? Your mere blessing won't convince the multitude." "Ah—But then, I'm not a convincing man." "No, you won't help me, I see," I said, "and I don't know why not: surely broadcasting could be a good thing for India?" "But why should I help a machine which will be used against me?" I grumbled that he always made me feel uncomfortable. "I do my best," I said, "what more can I do?" "I think you probably know," he replied, and, quoting Thoreau, he added, "If you would learn to speak all tongues and conform to the customs of all nations, if you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalised in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash her head against a stone, even obey the precept of the old philosopher, and explore thyself." So far as I was concerned, the shot went home: Gandhi could always make me feel

a twinge of conscience about the position I held, and the courses to which I was committed, as a member of the ruling race

After I had resigned my job in 1940, and just before I left India for England, I went to see him at Segaon. It was evening when I reached Wardha, and dark by the time I came to where he was sitting, with the familiar hurricane lamp beside him. at some distance from the camp, a hundred or so of his followers, who had come that day from some other part of India, squatting on the ground in semicircles before him. It was a romantic setting. the great arch of star-spangled night above, the immense silence around, the quiet voice speaking very simply. I sat on the ground and listened, and felt for the first time relief instead of regret that I was no longer a High Official of the Government of India. It seemed to me that there was something more real here than I had ever found in the power and glory of Imperial, suburban Delhi. And when at length he got up and, beckoning to me with his staff, said without more ado, as though he were continuing a conversation lately broken off, "We shall see you back, I think. I, at any rate, hope so," I felt that, perhaps for the first time, a corner of the veil which divided me from India had been lifted.

When, later, I wrote an article about him quoting Smuts' appreciation of his sincerity and greatness, my correspondence included a letter from a distinguished soldier who had had some part in the arrangements made for Gandhi's famous operation for appendicitis. He wrote at some length, describing how Gandhi's charm and patience had won him the affection of everyone concerned in that peculiar politico-surgical experiment. Comparatively rare though my opportunities of seeing Gandhi have been, I doubt whether anyone, unless he has the hide of a hippopotamus and the mind of a fossilized blimp, could fail to perceive the goodness of the man. a goodness may be as irritating to politicians as Christ's was to Pilate, but nevertheless good. Yet there are the hippopotami and the blimps, and, after my first meeting, I might well have been one of them. The bother about Gandhi, as far as Englishmen are concerned, is that he makes you feel small, or, to put it a little differently, he makes you feel that your soul, or your motives if you like, may be rather mean and paltry. He does not do this purposely: he would be the last person in the world to humiliate anyone. it is simply that his whole attitude denies yours, and you must either turn an uncomfortable mental somersault or else, like the rich young man with Christ, go away exceeding sorrowful, and generally exceeding bitter and calling Gandhi an old rogue, in order that you may safely rationalise your own way of life again, and close up the horrid vista of spiritual emptiness which Gandhi inevitably discloses. True, a great many worldly-wise, successful and intelligent people may logically be impatient of a "spiritual" attitude which robs them of success and distinction and power, condemns themselves and their children to poverty, and seemingly gives free rein, at any rate for the time being, to Hitler and other bullies. I chafe at it myself. I should funk the rigours of life at Wardha.

Be that as it may, Gandhi's life and attitude represent something very deeply embedded in the Indian mind. The great divide here is not only between Eastern and Western thought, but between Indians who have been forced into (but not necessarily impressed by) western ways, or entangled in (but not necessarily approving) the net of western economy, and the immensely greater mass of Indians who, on the Hindu side, still

tend to regard this life as Maya or illusion, and, on the Muslim side, retain the nomadic character of Islam, which presupposes, in its general attitude, the lack of great and enduring possessions I was silly enough, when I went to India, to decorate my house with extravagance, and, as I thought, taste. no Indian, as far as I know, ever noticed it, and Indian respect or loathing of me would have been nowise different, I ruefully recognised, if I had been living in a hovel Jawaharlal Nehru, when he once surprisingly paid me a visit, said—after I had rather irritably asked him what he thought of my Mayfairish drawing-room—"H'm—stately, rather than cosy." I drove myself about the country in a dainty blue and silver car, but even the villager remained uninterested I dressed, as I thought befitted my position, with immense care and my wretched staff, who thought (not inaccurately) that they had better copy me if they wanted to get on, were thereby plunged into miseries of discomfort, extravagance and debt I started for the staff a comfortably-equipped club, which rapidly proceeded to go bust, with dire results It took me, in fact, a very long time to realise that Indians looked for qualities very, very much more difficult to produce than the possession of possessions, which is, of course, still one of the most important qualities in the West. I am still a bit sore about all this before I went to India, I had a notion that I was a clever, independent and even noble fellow in (so to speak) my own right India taught me, quite sharply, that I had been trading quite extensively on the silver spoon And if India on the whole taught it me, Gandhi, whenever I saw him, gave me its very essence

This non-material attitude of India is, I venture to think—and I daresay that many Europeanised Indians, as well as Europeans, may scorn me for so thinking—of considerable importance to the future of humanity The Western world is caught in the grip of materialism industrialisation, the need for markets, the desire for power, the growing realisation in the mind of the masses that they are "poor" and ought to be richer, and even the socialist cry for better conditions and higher wages, all contribute to that grip and the success of materialism certainly means the establishment of some such world as I attempted to sketch in the second part of this book a world not of freedom for the human spirit but of the regimentation of efficient robots And from such a world the four hundred millions of India, combined perhaps with the millions of China, may yet do something to save the millions of the West It may not be so: the dice may be already too heavily loaded, the machine too firmly entrenched but who dare prophesy in what direction a world wearied by senseless massacre and disillusioned by the failure of its gods, might yet turn? The outlook of India, which the western business man has so contemptuously dismissed as inefficient, may yet prove more enduring than that of grasping, war-torn Europe: it may, come nearer to the heart of mankind than the screams of Hitler and the grunts of Churchill. The only method of avoiding war is the method of Gandhi let the planners and the politicians prate as they will, there is no alternative, none.

To be as positive as this is to be prejudiced: and as I had a grouch at prejudice at the beginning of this book, I must give a thought to it now. It will be said, not without justice, that humanity moves slowly: that Western and Eastern ideas can be usefully combined: that India, under the British Raj, has forged steadily ahead towards self-government: that she cannot stand alone: that industrialisation will bring prosperity and plenty to India's undernourished millions: that passive resistance may

be all very well in theory, but makes sheer nonsense when it is faced with Panzers, or when, as Gandhi himself admits, it is practised only by a section of the population. Sober, wise and sincere people will hold to the belief that with patience and care a *modus vivendi* and a constitution can be worked out between India and Britain, and millions, of course, will remain convinced that India can certainly have neither peace nor freedom until and unless the totalitarian bullies are conquered by force of arms.

Well, these too may be prejudices. Humanity does sometimes move quite quickly, as in Russia, as indeed in Europe to-day: eastern and western ideas may not combine successfully except between equal partners: India has now retreated so far from the goal of self-government that previous progress looks as if it might have been based on an ultimate hypocrisy. Whether India can stand—that is, find her own recipe for happiness—alone, we don't know: and history will not inform us, because there is nothing to show what India, left to herself, would have done with the discoveries and inventions of the last hundred years, or, for that matter, in what way she would herself have developed. Industrialization could undoubtedly give India up-to-date houses and plumbing and electric kitchens and chairs and tables, and plaster the remotest village with neon signs: it could unquestionably "raise the standard of living": but I am still inclined to think that that is a debatable aim. What, I hope, is not debatable is that war is an evil thing, what may well be true is that non-violence is its only permanent cure.

Even to write this in wartime is to risk infuriating the reader. humanity, inflamed by propaganda and driven by the thought of its sacrifices to the conviction that war is inevitable, sees peace only as the crown of conquest. Peace as the crown of self-sacrifice, of humility, of negotiation, of surrender, is decked out as a fifth-columnist, a defeatist, a traitor: just as the desire of Indians for freedom is adroitly tagged as treachery. This is not to blame humanity, tricked as it is by patent medicines and party slogans and promises of millenniums which never come. the road to war seems so obvious, the road to peace so awkward, courage seems so grand and humility so weak, that few can be blamed if they follow the majority. Yet some day, surely, man will grow weary of slaughter: and then perhaps he will see that peace can never be coupled with force, that peace can never be guaranteed by international armies, by coalitions, by collective securities, or by any other use of force, that peace is only, and quite simply, man's will not to fight.

Because Gandhi has held this doctrine, and for the second time in history put it into practice, he has been accused of many things which are wholly alien to his nature and teaching. And British propaganda about Gandhi has scarcely, during this war, come up to British standards of fair play.* Gandhi has been deliberately represented as being—and is so imagined by millions of decent English folk—anti-British, pro-Japanese, the main, if not the only, wrecker of the Cripps proposals, a saboteur,

*NOTE — 'You have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the "Duty of Civil Disobedience" scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose "Unto This Last" transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station, and Russia gave me in Tolstoi, a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the down-trodden people of the earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of

a deliberate instigator of violence, a defeatist. I suppose that Pilate, had he possessed the advantages of press and wireless, might have thought up similar lines. Gandhi has given his life to a constant and unrelenting fight against two things—aggression and violence. It is a fight to a finish: he has come to bring not peace but a sword, in the sense that Christ also did (Some persons seem to think that Christ was advocating the use of armaments.) Gandhi sees humanity as a whole, and bears no malice to any section of it: the time will come when it will be seen how, again and again, he prevented violent action against the British, whom, after all, he had more reason to dislike than any other nation. Now that he has once more, at the age of 73, been imprisoned by them, let us at least glance at what he has said about them in the past few months. These are random phrases collected from his writing and interviews:

"India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrews' friendship was enough to tie me to the British people. But both he and I were fixed in our determination that British rule in India, in any shape or form, must end . . . I remain the same friend to the British that I was. I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them. But I have never been blind to their limitations as I have not been blind to their great virtues. It has cost me much to come to the conclusion that the British should withdraw from India, and it is costing me still more to work out that conclusion . . . but it has become a paramount duty. And the beauty and necessity for withdrawal lie in its being immediate . . . I made it clear that no physical withdrawal of every Englishman was meant, I meant the withdrawal of the British domination. And every Englishman in India can convert himself into a friend, and remain here. The condition is that every Englishman has to dismount from the horse he is riding and cease to be monarch of all he surveys and identify himself with the humblest of us. The moment he does it, he will be recognised as a member of the family. His role as a member of the ruling caste

enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of "Unto This Last," I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty." To My American Friends, Gandhi (*Harlan*, August 9, 1942)

COMPARE WITH THIS: "Now comes Mr. Gandhi and his tragicomic act . . . It is nothing to Mr. Gandhi that a savage and greedy foe is at their gates. He will appeal to the 'better nature' of the Japanese, which he alone has located . . . Mr. Gandhi's plan would be intelligible only in one interpretation . . . that it is a *naïf* and *transparent machiavellianism* designed to impose the will of a *majority party* upon *unprotected minorities* (italics mine). The significance of Gandhi's performance lies . . . in the broad and depressing fact that people possessed by such suicidal notions should still be credited with wisdom." (*Sunday Times*, August 2, 1942)

"(The Congress) ratification of the resolution will be equivalent . . . to a declaration of 'open rebellion'—to use Mr. Gandhi's own words" (*Times*, August 4, 1942)

"The reluctance of Mr. Gandhi to accept such responsibilities (of administration) was evident from his first reception of the (Cripps) offer. Mr. Gandhi's draft teems with unreality . . . the bitter truth is that, step by step . . . he has refused them the leadership which he might have given and which only Indian statesmanship can give." (*Times*, August 5, 1942)

"Mr. Gandhi's pacifism . . . is incompatible with political leadership, and the attempt to combine them leads straight to the . . . wilful perversity of Mr. Gandhi's recent pronouncements." (*Times*, August 7, 1942—only two days later! Italics mine, in both cases.)

"Mr. Gandhi persists in a call which would, if effective, have the paradoxical result of ranging the Congress party among the enemies of the United Nations and the friends of Fascism and aggression." (*Times*, August 7, 1942. Italics mine.)

"Mr. Gandhi . . . drops into the ready ear of Congress the mischievous suggestion that the British may withdraw from India and let the Japanese in." (*Sunday Times*, August 9, 1942. These are only one week's quotations from which the popular and more violent press has been excluded.)

must end for ever. And so when I said 'withdraw,' I meant 'withdraw as masters.' The demand for withdrawal has another implication. You have to withdraw irrespective of the wishes of anybody here. You do not need the consent of a slave to give him freedom. The slave often hugs the chains of slavery. You have to tear them asunder and throw them away. You must withdraw because it is your duty to do so, and not wait for the unanimous consent of all the sections or groups in India. . . . If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognising the independence of India, without reference to the various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress is this—there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal. Either they recognise independence, or they don't. After that recognition many things can follow. For by that one single act, the British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore, when that great act is performed on behalf of the British people, it will be a red-letter day in the history of India and the world."

You may call this anti-Imperialist or anti-British-Raj, but anti-British it certainly isn't. And you will find nothing more anti-British than this in him, except perhaps for one single comment which the Cripps mission evoked:

"I used to say that my moral support was entirely with Britain. I am very sorry to have to confess that to-day my mind refuses to give that moral support. I was not quite prepared for Mr. Amery's performances or Sir Stafford Cripps' mission. These have, in my estimation, put Britain morally in the wrong. And, therefore, though I do not wish any humiliation to Britain—and, therefore, no defeat—my mind refuses to give her any moral support."

What is the reaction of the average Britisher to this? Well—perhaps there isn't any "average" Britisher. The business and Tory reaction would obviously be—a fig for your "moral support"—all we want is money and men and munitions. But I have never found this kind of reaction among the masses, bemused though they may be by anti-Gandhi propaganda or Ministerial encouragements of slaughter. In factories and villages up and down the country, I have always found, very near the surface, and very easily aroused, a sincere preoccupation with the moral issues of the war, and a sincere desire to see India free. I do not believe that the message of Gandhi, if it could be freely and widely spoken, would find anything but respect in the hearts of the British people. I do not believe that Gandhi, if he were allowed to move freely about this country and state his case, would inspire anything but admiration and affection. The Britisher, on the whole, loves peace, humour, and fair play, and no one represents these qualities more than Gandhi. Emerging from his hut to meet some correspondents who had come without appointment, he said: "One American has been vivisectioning me. I am now at your disposal." Asked to allay the rising tide of unrest created by British reverses, he wrote:

"The recent British reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged, there have been reverses, some of which might have been considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into stepping-stones to success. Failures do not dismay or demoralize them. They take them with calmness and in a sportsmanlike spirit.

If we have learnt nothing else worthwhile from our contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes "

And, speaking of the past, he said "During the last war, as you perhaps know, I threw myself heart and soul into it I became a voluntary recruiting agent for the British I began my agency in a district in which I had just been leading a campaign for agricultural relief with fair success. I should have made great headway there. But I tell you I did not do so. I used to walk miles in the burning sun in order to collect recruits and to make an impression on the people about the urgency of it. But I could not You will see, therefore, that my influence, great as it may appear to outsiders, is strictly limited I may have considerable influence to conduct a campaign for redress of popular grievances because people are ready and need a helper But I have no influence to direct people's energy in a channel in which they have no interest."

Here for a moment I must interrupt the consideration of Gandhi's philosophy to quote from a letter written by an Indian late in this year (1942) a letter which has managed, like those from another enslaved continent, to reach this country.

"The whole atmosphere is one of a terrible civil war with awful possibilities The Communist Party and Royists are playing an anti-national, anti-Indian policy and are coming in for a terrible lot of public opprobrium Their heads are bartered away to Moscow and London, and Indian nationalists and students are disgusted with them I am so much upset by the Communist Party's betrayal of the Colonial People's freedom cause that I am impatient to do whatever I can for developing the Colonial People's Freedom Front But most of the work ought to be done by you and others in England and U.S.A. who are in touch with more people Now I am going to gaol What will happen to the world? Indians are now too hopelessly gone against the British and

I am even afraid they may even be glad of Japanese interference, out of mere cussedness With this temper in the people, Japanese aggression will become almost invincible Yet the British Government goes its own blind, suicidal way What a tragedy! We are all anti-Fascists at heart, and desire in our own impotent manner to be free from the clutches of Fascism But we can't be free just now, thanks to the cussedness of the British, the cupidity of the Japs, the might of the Germans, and the selfishness and self-centredness of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. Three-quarters of the Indian papers have stopped publication as a protest against the press muzzling by the Government There is to-day Fascist domination of the worst kind Civil Liberty has evaporated There is place only for traitors and cowards outside the jails So I am glad to be sent to jail again "

I wish that British readers would seriously consider that letter, and particularly the phrase which deals with the United Nations, as a real if incoherent interpretation of a not unreasonable Indian attitude If you want successful war, you will not get it by browbeating four hundred million people if you want secure peace, you will not get it by estranging and enslaving a continent In that light, let us look at Gandhi's doctrine of passive resistance, and also at the Congress attitude towards the war It must be realised that there is a difference between the two. Gandhi sees in non-violence the real solution of war: the Congress see in it a course which they are forced to employ towards Britain at the present

juncture. Yet Gandhi himself is not dogmatic on this issue, as the following passage will show:

"Now we have a promise of a never-ending stream of soldiers from America and possibly China. I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then, why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation for the so-called defence of India. It is a preparation, pure and simple, for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. How much more creditable, how much braver it would be for Britain to offer battle in the West and leave the East to adjust her own position! There is no guarantee that she will be able to protect, during this war, all her vast possessions. They have become a deadweight round her. If she wisely loosens herself from this weight, and the Nazis, the Fascists, or the Japanese, instead of leaving India alone, choose to subjugate her, they will find that they have to hold more than they can in their iron hoop. They will find it much more difficult than Britain has. Their very rigidity will strangle them. The British system had an elasticity which served so long as it had no powerful rivals. British elasticity is of no help to-day. I have said more than once in these columns that the Nazi power has risen as a nemesis to punish Britain for her sins of exploitation and enslavement of the Asiatic and African races."

This is hardly defeatism, whatever else it may be called. Rubbish, do you think? Are you sure? Has any Viceroy talked better than this? Suppose that India was a neutral like Egypt, suppose that vast continent was a neutral well-disposed towards an England which had given her freedom, suppose that we did not have to use troops there to keep order, or even fight, and that we could concentrate them elsewhere, are you *sure* that we should be the losers? But let us look a little more closely at the doctrine of non-violence itself. The following is taken from some recent interviews:

"I have said that there should be unadulterated non-violent non-cooperation, and if the whole of India responded and unanimously offered it, I should show that Japanese arms—or any combination of arms—can be sterilised. That involves the determination of India not to give quarter on any point whatsoever and to be ready to risk the loss of several million lives. But I would consider that cost very cheap and victory won at that cost glorious. That India may not be ready to pay that price may be true. I hope it is not true, but some such price must be paid by any country that wants to retain its independence. After all, the sacrifice made by the Russians and Chinese is enormous, and they are ready to risk all. The cost is enormous. Therefore, in the non-violent technique I am asking India to risk no more than other countries are risking and which India would have to risk if she offered armed resistance."

"But unadulterated non-violent non-cooperation has not been successful against Great Britain. How will it succeed against a new aggressor?"

"I combat that statement altogether. Nobody has yet told me that non-violent non-cooperation, *unadulterated*, has not succeeded. It has not been offered, it is true. Therefore, you can say that what has not been offered hitherto is not likely to be offered suddenly when India

faces the Japanese arms. I can only hope that, in the face of danger, India would be readier to offer non-violent non-cooperation. But your question is well put. It is possible that India may not be able to offer it. But a similar question may be put regarding armed resistance. Several attempts have been made and they have not succeeded. Therefore, it may not succeed against the Japanese. That leads to the absurd conclusion that India will never be ready for gaining independence, and seeing that I cannot subscribe to any such proposition, I must try again and again until India is ready to respond to the call of non-violent non-cooperation. But if India does not respond to that call, then India must respond to the call of some leader or some organisation wedded to violence. For instance, the Hindu Mahasabha is trying to rouse the Hindu mind for an armed conflict. It remains to be seen whether that attempt succeeds. I for one do not believe it will succeed . . . And therein comes my non-violence. We have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the Allied forces there. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon. Now, in theory, I can prove to you that our non-violent resistance can be wholly successful. We need not kill a single Japanese, we simply give them no quarter."

"But that non-violence can't prevent an invasion?"

"In non-violent technique there can be nothing like preventing an invasion. They will land, but they will land on an inhospitable shore. They may be ruthless and wipe out all the 400 millions. That would be complete victory. I know you will laugh at it, saying 'all this is absurd.' I would say you are right, we may not be able to stand that terror and we may have to go through a course of subjection worse than our present state. But we are discussing the theory."

"But if the British don't withdraw?"

"I do not want them to withdraw under Indian pressure, nor driven by force of circumstances. I want them to withdraw in their own interest for their own good name."

"Would a Free India declare war on Japan?"

"Free India need not do so. It simply becomes the ally of the Allied Powers, simply out of gratefulness for the payment of a debt, however overdue. Human nature thanks the debtor when he discharges the debt."

"How, then, would this alliance fit in with India's non-violence?"

"It is a good question. The whole of India is not non-violent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain, nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my non-violence is represented possibly by a hopeless minority, or, perhaps, by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there, too, the question may be asked: 'What have they done?' They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, and they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as non-violence of the weak. And so all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, so that it may find an echo in the British heart."

"Will your campaign collapse if the Government sent you and thousands of your followers to jail?"

"I hope not; on the contrary, it should gain strength if it has any vitality."

"With the enemy at the gates, what is your objection to calling a truce?"

"This struggle has been conceived in order to avert a catastrophe. At the critical moment, an un-free India is likely to become a hindrance rather than a help. The Congress resolution itself hints at the possibility of a large number of Indians going over to the Japanese side—if they effected a landing on the Indian shores—as we know happened in Burma, Malaya and, for aught I know, Singapore too. I am of the opinion that this might have been prevented at least so far as Burma is concerned, if she had been made independent. But it was not done. We know the result. We are determined, so far as is humanly possible, to secure our independence, so that no Indian worth the name would then think of going over to the Japanese side."

"But with time so short, don't you think you have a moral duty to stand by the Russians and Chinese?"

"Don't you see that if it was a purely personal question, what you say would have been perfectly possible. But even with the combined influence of every member of the Working Committee, it would be impossible to enthuse the masses in favour of the Allied cause, which they do not understand, cannot understand."

It is easy to pick holes in Gandhi's arguments and indeed in the whole case for non-violence. It is something which mankind has not tried or at least, not fully tried. Gandhi has shown that it is not ineffective: he is no mere visionary. He sees in it a workable combination of Indian temperament, Indian freedom—and indeed all freedom—and the abolition of war. He is not so much for taking the slap on the cheek as for holding the slapper firmly by the hand, without anger, until his temper is exhausted. And it seems to me that the doctrine of non-violence might, if it were studied without prejudice, appear not so unattractive even to a war-winner-at-all-costs. We cannot arm the whole of India: we almost certainly cannot defend it with our own arms as things are: we need troops and equipment elsewhere. A free India, grateful to the United Nations and determined to keep its freedom, might be something a great deal better than the present sullen sub-continent. And fraternization with Japan, that bogey which is wagged at the British public, is far less likely than a Russian fraternization with Germany. India, once bitten by conquest, is twice shy of it. This is what the Working Committee of Congress had to say on July 14, 1942.

"India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India, but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, Militarism, and other forms of Imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another . . . The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into good-will, and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom."

"In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage

aggression on India, or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied Powers. The Congress is, therefore, agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China."

That is one answer to the accusation that the Congress is pro-Japanese or pro-Axis or anti-British or saboteur. What about Gandhi himself? His letter "to every Japanese," whatever it may seem in to-day's fever, may be relevant enough in ten or twenty years' time, when we have once more become friendly with Japan. And it is worth quoting here, if only for the light it sheds on Gandhi's allegedly pro-Japanese sentiments.

"I must confess at the outset that though I have no ill will against you, I intensely dislike your attack upon China. From your lofty height you have descended to imperial ambition. You will fail to realise that ambition and may become the authors of the dismemberment of Asia, thus unwittingly preventing World Federation and brotherhood without which there can be no hope for humanity.

"Ever since I was a lad of eighteen studying in London over fifty years ago I learnt through the writings of the late Sir Edwin Arnold to prize the many excellent qualities of your nation. I was thrilled when in South Africa I learnt of your brilliant victory over Russian arms. After my return to India from South Africa in 1915, I came in close touch with Japanese monks who lived as members of our Ashram from time to time. One of them became a valuable member of the Ashram in Sewagram, and his application to duty, his dignified bearing, his unflinching devotion to daily worship, affability, unruffledness under varying circumstances, and his natural smile which was positive evidence of his inner peace had endeared him to all of us. And now that owing to your declaration of war against Great Britain he has been taken away from us, we miss him as a dear co-worker. He has left behind him as a memory his daily prayer and his little drum, to the accompaniment of which we open our morning and evening prayers.

"In the background of these pleasant recollections I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land.

"It was a worthy ambition of yours to take equal rank with the great Powers of the world. Your aggression against China and your alliance with the Axis Powers were surely an unwarranted excess of that ambition."

"I should have thought that you would be proud of the fact that the great and ancient people whose old classical literature you have adopted as your own are your neighbours. Your understanding of one another's history, tradition, literature should bind you as friends rather than make you the enemies you are to-day.

"If I were a free man, and if you allowed me to come to your country, frail though I am, I would not mind risking my health, maybe my life, to come to your country to plead with you to desist from the wrong you are doing to China and the world and, therefore, to yourself.

"But I enjoy no such freedom. And we are in the unique position of having to resist an Imperialism that we detest no less than yours and Nazism. Our resistance to it does not mean harm to the British people. We seek

to convert them. Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule. An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly but friendly quarrel with the foreign rulers.

"But in this they need no aid from foreign Powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity we should have done it as soon as the war broke out nearly three years ago.

"Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British power from India should in no way be misunderstood. In fact, if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the independence of India, a recognition of that independence by Britain should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover the reported profession sorts ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

"I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India by making her free for resisting all militarist and imperialist ambition, whether it is called British Imperialism, German Nazism or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarisation of the world in spite of our belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist spirit and ambition. Personally I fear that without declaring the independence of India the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare.

"If they copy it their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to naught. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognising now the freedom of India, and turning sullen India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

"To Britain and the Allies we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions and in their own self-interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies, some other Power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win you will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds however skilfully achieved.

"Even if you win it will not prove that you were in the right it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the Allies too, unless they perform now the just and righteous act of freeing India as an earnest promise of similarly freeing all other subject people in Asia and Africa.

"Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. *I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you*

and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

"The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Anyway I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature. On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this appeal to you

"I am your friend and well wisher,

"M. K. GANDHI "

This letter is in itself sufficient to show that Gandhi's conception of non-violence is not defeatism: it is scarcely even pacifism as that word has now come to be interpreted in England. Gandhi is dynamic and not static—he represents and guides to a very great extent the inchoate ideas and aspirations of India's submerged and still static millions: and for their souls the race between materialism and spiritualism is on. Gandhi is the unrelenting enemy of power, wealth, aggression—and industrialisation—he is the greatest living exponent of the creed of love. I believe, as I have said, that his doctrine of non-violence might appeal, for India's case at least, even to the world-war-strategist. I would add how strangely sad it seems that Christians, and in particular Christian ministers lip-serving in their churches and repeating the words "*Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the Children of God,*" can view with indifference and even approval the incarceration of Gandhi by the Pilates of to-day. Gandhi, languishing in jail at 73, while America and Britain hasten to hustle India into modernisation, may not live to see anything but the apparent failure of his mission, as other prophets have done: but an idea which is right is more enduring than panzers or politicians. I have a notion that the legend of Gandhi may yet be a flaming inspiration to the millions of the East, and perhaps to those of the West. But it is, for the time being at least, the East which provides the fruitful soil, because the East has not yet fallen prone, as the West has done, before the Golden Calf. And it may be for the East, once again, to show mankind that human happiness does not depend on that particular form of worship, and that the conquest of materialism is also the conquest of war.

CHAPTER IX

The fourth divide of India is between the town and the village.

The mere mention of the Indian village—there are 700,000 of them—raises a whole host of problems concerning agrarian reform, standards of living, revenues, indebtedness, poverty, the fragmentation and fertility of land, irrigation and so on. Such problems need a whole book to themselves (Sir Malcolm Darling in particular has made a fascinating study of them), and I neither intend, nor want, nor am competent to deal with

them But there are, as it seems to me, three main points which it is vital for any Englishman who is interested in Indian issues to grasp. They are.

1. Roughly nine-tenths of the population of India—say 350,000,000 out of 390,000,000—live in villages and are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture and industry, *however much it may be developed, is never likely to absorb more than a fraction of this, or of the six or seven million heads added annually to the population*

2. The poverty and chronic indebtedness (to moneylenders) of the villager are appalling the landless or nearly landless peasant earns about twopence a day He is ignorant, illiterate, religious, shrewd, and, in spite of undernourishment, lusty—he has to be He has, as yet, no voice in the affairs of India, except through the recently-developing Kisan Sabhas, and through Gandhi and the Congress The potential consequences of his awakening are immeasurable

3 The English word "village" and its association in English minds are dangerously misleading when applied to Indian huts and Indian village conditions

The last point may seem obvious to the verge of silliness, but men are apt to judge things in terms of their own experience the harp and the nightgown and not, as you might very reasonably suppose, the garb and musical instruments of Palestine, are the accredited accoutrements of the Christian Heaven Heaven may be fearfully un-English, and so is the Indian village In the first place, the attitude of the townsman towards the village is wholly different Englishmen, in direct contrast to Indians, live ninety per cent in towns and ten per cent in villages and a surfeit of grime, gloom and glitter has caused them (at any rate for holidays) to idealise the village To them the village is peace and quiet, rest and recreation, butter and milk, roses round the door, and health To an Indian townsman it isn't in the least any of those things It is hard work and hot work, congested huts, abysmal poverty, routine life, and complete lack of opportunity The villager, of course, is not necessarily conscious of any such feelings but he is burningly aware that there isn't enough money or land or produce, and he knows that the rich and mighty always come from the towns Therefore, though he may be indifferent or conservative enough not to budge himself, he can sympathise with the allure of the town for his children Off they go, and they don't come back Why? Because in the town, where Opportunity seems to stalk with a capital O, they are dazzled by the aura of distinction surrounding "a clerical job," to which indeed the Government of India and business firms, in the search for clerks, have given an unhealthy importance. The clerk Grade III who gets 30 rupees (45/-) a month is already doing better than his brother in the village, and has his foot on the ladder of fame, as well as the tremendous and awe-inspiring responsibility of "writing memoranda" He is in touch with the great world, and he feels contempt for village life. He will never go back to it, even if life offers him nothing better than Clerk Grade III, because he has learnt to despise manual labour, and anyhow can't do it If, on the other hand, he fails even to become Clerk Grade III, he is none the less bewitched, and to go back to the village, confessing failure, is unthinkable so he hangs around, gets a job, perhaps behind a shop counter, does a bit of rather peculiar journalism, and becomes a potential political agitator. Thus there tends to be a constant, albeit small, drain of the more intelligent and ambitious youngsters from the villages to the towns, where they tend to form an unstable

political element while there is no corresponding return of young men trained in agriculture to the villages * The channel through which Indian agriculture should constantly be improved simply does not flow: the village remains conservative, backward and ignorant the town becomes a whirl of political intrigue the gap between them yawns wider and wider. Industrialisation, no doubt, causes somewhat similar processes everywhere what seems alarming in India is that, on the one hand, the lure is not to industry but to "the clerical job," the opportunities of which are now only for the few, and on the other, the combination of backward methods, poor (because badly treated) soil, and low yield, produce stagnation and even perhaps deterioration in the lot of the overwhelming majority, and that in a world which is by no means deficient in agricultural progress. Whatever the faults of the Indian, I do not think that the British, after 150 years of rule, can wholly escape the blame for this state of affairs.

In these factors there are, obviously, elements of a possible immense upheaval but the tendency is masked by the townee, who, divorced from the villager and therefore from ninety per cent of his countrymen (who represent one fifth of the world's population), at present monopolises the press and the platform. Yet the townee is not really much more than the skin on the milk of all India and the milk may boil over. It may draw a bow at a venture, and a long bow at that, to suggest that present party divisions, representing only a fraction of India and based on urban ideas which are to some extent westernised and artificial, might explode into thin air if the villager happened to wake up. In most countries, particularly where distances are small and communications good, ideas and movements percolate easily and gently through the various classes of society, but in India, as in Russia before the revolution, the current fails to bridge the gap clerical contempt on one side, poverty and illiteracy on the other, combine to keep it wide. The times are not unpropitious for the spark to jump with explosive effect the fillip given by war and wireless to the spread of information, propaganda and counter-propaganda, the increased movement and bustle in the country, the rise of nationalist feeling, the threat from without and the political agitation within, and, above all, the imprisonment of Congress leaders, all tend to accelerate the growth of political consciousness among the unknown and hitherto dumb masses of the Indian countryside. The divide between town and village may have consequences as shattering as those of Tsardom †

On the other hand it may not. It is easy to argue that it will not. The Indian peasant or ryot is perhaps so ignorant, so ill-equipped and ill-organised, so temperamentally fatalistic, and so habituated to serfdom that he will never be anything but a pawn in the game of modernised force and power. He may never, as Gandhi himself has said, respond to

*The prosperous farm or farmer, or squire, or gentleman farmer, are concepts unknown and foreign to India such traditions simply do not exist. the agriculturalists of India are mainly labourers or allotment-holders, dominated by the absentee landlord, the money-lender, and the tax-collector

†Cf. Guy Wint. "The Indian way of life is a tapestry strange, obviously very old, still apparently intact. There is no danger that this antique character of India will be inadequately appreciated, for it is the thing which most strikes the visitor to the country. Rather the danger is that the observer will assume that because it is old it is everlasting, and will be so much interested in the tapestry as to fail to notice what lies behind it. In the Indian mind the signs are not those of conservatism, and stagnation, but of rapid and perhaps shattering change" (*India and Democracy*, p. 86)

the call of either violence or non-violence. Yet it is also difficult to imagine that so large and so ill-treated a section of humanity will remain unaffected by the present upheaval, and particularly by the vast changes in their Asiatic neighbours, Russia and China. If the Indian masses do not go by the way of revolution and chaos (from which, as Gandhi has said, a united India might arise), what other process of change seems likely?

"The villager," exclaimed Mrs Naidu, when I puffed the benefits of rural radio, "doesn't want your beastly wireless. he wants food and soap." That is true enough: nobody can argue that the Indian villager isn't entitled to a much better deal from the world. It was also true that a well-known Western soap company had offered me a surprisingly large sum for my consent to include one phrase of advertisement in the daily village programme. It was a nice point, I thought, whether Indian villagers would be more "exploited" when dirty, or when induced to swell the profits of a British vested interest. One might argue that the villager, so long as he was ignorant, would be exploited by somebody and therefore that education came first. Education for what? In my limited experience I found the Indian villager shrewd and humorous even in terms of happiness I am not sure that I would rate him below the youths to whom I talked in my Essex village in 1941, who earned a minimum of £3 a week driving tractors, smoked fifty cigarettes a day apiece, thought only of girls and cinemas, and seemed to me quite notably apathetic and dismal human beings. The Indian villager has a way of life that is his own, and is conservative about it. When Mr. Brayne of the Punjab insisted that village huts must have windows (thus letting in the heat and glare, and excluding the grateful shade), the villagers dutifully inserted his standard type: and blocked them up again as soon as he departed. When we lectured the villagers of Bundsi on the benefits of radio, they asked us dryly, when we'd finished, whether we had by chance a spare needle for the gramophone on which they unceasingly listened to the *Gita*. Brayne's windows and Fielden's radio were flops; and so may be, for some time to come, Western or Russian steam-roller methods of industrialisation or collectivisation.

Russia is the example, large in the eye to-day, of apparently successful revolution. Among extremists there are voices which accuse Gandhi of being a "stumbling-block to revolution" and "the best policeman of the British Raj." For the 350 million agriculturalists of India the choice may well lie between the ideas of Gandhi* and those of Lenin. Says Shervankar "It is indeed Russia that supplies the precedent for the measures that alone can put Indian agriculture back on its feet. There is no constructive alternative." And such an argument, when one considers the Indian villager dispossessed, as he is, by the moneylender and the landlord, may seem irresistible. Nevertheless the way of revolution may not be an Indian, or a desirable, way: Gandhi, for thirty years magnetising Indian thought in an Indian manner from the centre of India, is a million miles removed from Lenin, the ruthless returning westernised exile. Russia may have needed a spark from without but India has many lights burning

*Cf. Guy Wint: "His Utopia is a federation of village societies each of which would manage its own affairs by means of panchayats, maintain order, administer justice, and provide for its severely simple needs. Such a plan is of course by no means novel. A kind of despair at what man has created in the way of political institutions . . . has appeared at intervals in European political thinking no less than in Indian religious philosophy" (*India and Democracy*, p. 110)

within herself. The Wardha Education Scheme and the work of the National Planning Committee, though from the British point of view "unofficial," and though sadly obscured by present events, represent serious and vital contributions of Indian genius to India's future. At the head of each stand men whose worth and greatness no Indian revolution could affect: Dr. Zakir Husain of the Jamia Millia Islamia at Delhi, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The object of the Wardha scheme was to provide 7 years compulsory education on a nation-wide scale, the medium of instruction to be the mother-tongue, and the training to centre round manual and productive work. The International Bureau of Education described it (170/R 1090 Geneva, December 1939) as "a scheme that may revolutionise the education and social life of 350 millions" and "of interest to educationists in all countries." Those who are interested in its fascinating details will find them in the issue of *Harjan* of December 11, 1937, and in the annual reports published by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. Such a study will go far to show how deeply Eastern and Western approaches to education may differ. Similarly, the work of the National Planning Committee shows an approach to industrialisation far removed from ours. Such examples—and there are many—point to the conclusions that an India guided by a national government could take the path of peaceful and satisfying evolution, but that an India from which the influence of Gandhi and the Congress leaders has been removed by British repression is more likely—as is now apparent—to veer into violence, bloodshed and disintegration.

CHAPTER X

The fifth divide of India and the last which I shall deal with here, is the linguistic and racial divide.

There are two reasons for alluding to the subject—first, that the average Englishman believes that all Indians are Indians, but all Europeans aren't Europeans, in other words, that the Punjabi or Madras is just "an Indian," while the Englishman is not just "a European" secondly, that the present boundaries of provinces and states in India are artificial and may need to be changed.

India is not a nation. That does not imply that India is incapable of unity—any more than Switzerland, with her three diverse groups. What it does mean is that an imposed Central Government on the Westminster model—the government of a small homogeneous island—is probably unsuited to India. If we are not to go hopelessly wrong in our ideas about India's future, it is essential for us to face up to the diversity of India. Here is what Lord Lytton, former Governor of Bengal, has to say on the subject:

"Both British and Indians are responsible for the growth in India of a political ideology which is in fact illusory. The British, since the days when the Government of the country was taken over from the East India Company, have created a form of administration which was adapted to the function it had to fulfil, namely, the unified direction from one centre of the affairs of *many diverse peoples*, speaking different languages, with different traditions, customs, habits and religions. They thus created

out of these *many different communities* one political State, and that State was administered by officials who were not irresponsible but were answerable for all their acts to *British public opinion*. The form of Government was *sited to the purposes for which it was devised*, and therefore worked satisfactorily. Having created one State it was inevitable that they should speak of it as India, and its Government as the Government of India. It was also inevitable that Indian politicians should come to speak of themselves as Indians. But the British who had created an Indian State *had not created an Indian nation, nor was it in their power to do so*. Only Indians themselves could do this, and the task of doing it was begun when the Congress party was formed" (Lord Lytton, *Pundits and Elephants*, p. 191) (Italics mine)

Let me hammer this message home with a few more examples. Major Yeats Brown, the author of "Bengal Lancer," who naturally feels that, even if the worst comes to the worst, some good British troops will be wanted on the North-West Frontier, goes so far as to say this

"To formulate a detailed scheme *for the future nations of India* would be beyond the scope of a much larger book than this. The Pakistan plan as propounded by the Muslim League is faced with practical difficulties. The same is true of any plan for making an enclave round Amritsar, in which the Sikhs might enjoy independence. As to the Princes, to maintain their present rule amidst two or three independent nations will not be easy. And it will be a matter of even greater complexity as to how the British would fit into the picture. Obviously a single Government for all India would be cheaper and simpler. But the *peoples of India, like the peoples of the rest of the world, prefer nationhood to unitary government*" (*Indian Pageant*, F. Yeats Brown, p. 174) (Italics mine)

Now comes, with his customary dash and flourish, Lord Wedgwood

"H.M. Government must, however, get out of the saddle somehow. Three hundred and ninety million people saying "In God's name, go!" is too much. That is why men of such differing political faith as Sir John Wardlaw-Milne, Sir George Schuster, Sir Stanley Reed and myself have urged that we should proceed Province by Province, and allow such Provinces to federate after they are free. 'Allow' is the wrong word, when free, they can make their own terms with their neighbours or with Russia or Siam or Britain. Let each Province start its 'Constituent' whenever it likes. There is no need to hurry them. Make it clear that under any circumstances they can do just as they like after the war, that we do not propose to dictate to Indians ever any more—above all, that the armed forces will be theirs (not ours), directly the Provinces say 'go'" (*Testament to Democracy*, Lord Wedgwood, p. 152)

And now, with stately tread, Messrs. Thompson and Garratt:

"We may expect a vigorous provincial life, with threats of secession if the central government is too expensive or too domineering. Already such slogans as 'Bengal for the Bengalis' have made themselves heard, and the effect of the new constitution will be to leave the more interesting 'nation-building' services to the provincial legislatures. . . . Possibly the future will see a number of almost autonomous units, based roughly on the existing Provinces and larger States, but each developing along its own lines, and merely sacrificing a measure of its sovereignty to a body like a miniature League of Nations." (*Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, Thompson and Garratt, p. 653.)

Sir George Schuster has something not dissimilar to say

"In India the 'units' have been in the past combined under one authority—the Provinces in a unitary constitution under the British Government, and the States closely linked under the same supervision. The centrifugal impulse in such cases is normally strong, and in the consummation of other federations it has needed some strong outside influence, a threat from an external power, or some insistent and compelling experience of the disadvantages of complete separation . . . to bring the units to the point where each has been willing to sacrifice a part of its own free sovereignty for the sake of the advantages of common action . . . Ought there not to be a reversion *to the natural order*, making the Provinces and States the starting-point of the discussion, and leaving them to treat the powers now exercised by the Central Government as held in trust pending a decision as to their distribution?" (*India and Democracy*, p. 366) (Italics mine)

And lastly, Mr Guy Wint

" . . . It was clear that although Indian society had undergone great changes it was still very unlike those societies which had made a success of parliamentary government. Its special peculiarity was that, in spite of the existence of a vigorous national movement . . . *India was not a nation* in anything like the same sense as is common in Europe. As a result of past history and of the age-old tendency for society in India to fall apart into groups living isolated from one another, India is still a congeries of economic classes, religious communities, and *peoples sundered from one another by differences in culture and language* . . . the present situation in India is in some ways rather similar to that of certain countries in central Europe. Yet even in these countries the divisions are for the most part far less acute than in India, since in many the conflicting factions are brought into sympathy with one another by a common language which, together with religion, has been the great architect of united nations. But in India *the diverse languages have been the chief of the factors making for division*" (*India and Democracy*, p. 136) (Italics mine)

Here then you have half-a-dozen authorities, with whose general ideas one needn't necessarily agree, coming pretty close together on one point - a retreat from the idea that unity or federation can be imposed on the diversified peoples of the Indian sub-continent. You may go further and say, quite rightly, that British rule is the only thing that has held them together—by force. So why not let it go on? Equally, why not let Hitler's unification of Europe go on? Ah, but that's so very different. Maybe: but if those great-hearted, freedom-loving people, the Americans, or those grand, courageous, fraternal people, the Russians were to try unifying Great Britain with Europe by force, how should we like it? Nobody really much cares for being unified by force, however splendid the intention of the unifiers.

Great Britain with Europe? But Great Britain is a nation! Well—what is a nation? Does it depend on size—or language—or geographical frontiers—or history—or time—or force—or its own will? When is a nation not a nation? Switzerland seems to be a nation, although it speaks three languages and has three different groups. Poland was a nation in 1939 but couldn't have been so described in 1914. Scotland was a nation. So was Yugoslavia after 1918 but certainly not before. Is New Zealand a nation? The United States is a nation but South America

isn't. Yet Chile, for instance, with its four million inhabitants, and the Argentine, with twelve, have much more in common, including language, and are younger nations than the sixty million Bengalis and the three million Pathans. England and France, or for that matter England and Germany, have more in common, by most tests—language, religion, customs, dress—than have the fourteen millions of Hyderabad with the eight millions of Assam. The Punjabi, twenty-eight millions of him, has, whether Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, a quite definite loyalty to his land—the Punjab: the Madrasis, who outnumber Great Britain by three millions, have (in spite of a Scots tendency to fare forth and capture all important jobs) a passionate love of their own country—Madras—and its customs, food and music. The Pathan is as far, in mere distance, from the Madrasi as is Bristol from the Black Sea, and from the Bengali as is Spain from Smyrna. And the Pathan, Madrasi and Bengali are very nearly as different as the Welsh miner, the Spaniard and the Turk. Very nearly . . .

. . . But not quite. Here I must pause before my Indian friends thank me, with a crack on the jaw, for making too much of Indian divisions. Although some 150 languages are spoken in India, although tradition is strong and racial ties close, although the religious cleavage is far greater than in the western world, and reacts more fiercely on everyday life, although the millions of Maharashtra are absolutely different from the millions of Bihar, there does exist in India a feeling of Indian entity, India as a country, which is absent in Europe. Aha! says Sir Amerchill Blipps, that's British rule! No, I don't care for that answer at all. It isn't British rule. British rule, though it has happened to be contemporaneous with the railway, motor-car, telephone and wireless, which have made unification far easier, has on the whole built up artificial distinctions between various districts of India as they have never in Indian history been built before. Battles and conquerors have swept through India like whiskey through water, but, until British civil servants arrived, nobody had been *tidy* about India. Nobody had tried very seriously to draw lines on maps, and find out very carefully who was who and where he came from and where he ought properly to go. India has drifted down through history like a great benignant whale, absentmindedly swallowing her conquerors and assimilating them, and caring very little for her figure or her tail. But Mr. Smith she could not swallow. Mr. Smith who found the ambergris and took it away, and then proceeded to analyse and label every organ, so that Tail suddenly said "I don't belong to you at all! I'm Bengal! Terrorism, art, Santuniketan and all that!" and Stomach grumbled "Wardha!" while Lungs breathed "Pakistan!" So Mr. Smith, after labelling everything and saying loudly that whales were pretty poor stuff, went away to Cheltenham (a thing no decent conqueror had ever thought of doing) and from there wrote to *The Times* to note the extraordinary manner in which whales split themselves up, the naughty things. And in due course Sir Chillery Scrapps went out to India with a prescription for patching up whales . . .

India is, in fact, a "land of mystery," as Miss Maud Diver, for aught I know, may have already remarked, chiefly because it doesn't fit European tape-measures: it is neither united nor disunited *in the European sense*. The "frontiers" of Provinces and States are almost non-existent, except as lines on a map: they are no more than political conveniences of British rule, which conform only very sketchily to racial and linguistic

differentiations. Mr. Smith has ironed out India so thoroughly that it is not easy to say exactly where those differentiations now lie, but it is a fairly safe bet that the linguistic divisions which still matter are those between the millions speaking Sindhi, Pushtu, Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam and Kanarese. If you were to redraw the map of India with divisions corresponding with these round dozen linguistic areas (wiping out the Princes, of course, who dash in and out of linguistic areas with tyrannic abandon) you would get something, I am tempted to think, which would fit better into the Indian historical pattern and form the beginning of a successful federation. Men cannot successfully grasp too large an ideal: the Indian has a first, and very strong, loyalty to his family: a second and by no means negligible loyalty to his nation, which really means the language, culture, customs, food, art, and temperament of those among whom he was born and bred; and a third, quite definite, loyalty to India against the world. But that last loyalty is not, of course, to the British Raj or the idiotic statue of King George Vth. at Delhi—any more than an all-European loyalty could be to Hitler: Indian loyalty to the concept of India is undoubtedly focussed in, and only in, the Congress Party. And particularly in the figure of Gandhi. It is—if we can take a European analogy at all—as though a thrilling cry for European unity could be voiced not by oppressive Hitler but by some Pastor Niemöller become Pope. I might dare to try another analogy and say that the voice of Gandhi calling for Indian unity is not so very far removed from the voice of Britain (if Britain were as popular as Gandhi) calling the oppressed and unarmed nations of Europe to unite against the oppression of Germany. And of all Nationalist parties the Congress alone stands, and has always worked, for a united India.

But the unity of India is held firmly in the pattern of her history. The nations of the Indian sub-continent will coalesce only by their own desire and in their own way. You cannot suddenly impose upon the traditions and habits of a three-thousand-year-old civilization the steel frame of a constitution drafted by alien minds. The attempt will always be a failure.

So—

1. India is not a nation: the habit of thinking her so leads Cripps missions into expecting miracles of unity which don't materialise.

2. India will not federate to a British, or other foreign, model.

3. The internal frontiers of India will need to be redrawn by Indian hands: the federation of her peoples must be the creation of Indian minds.

CHAPTER XI

In the foregoing sections I have attempted to give an impression, not too much complicated by detail, of the main divisions of the Indian sub-continent. It is of course a dangerous thing to do: it comes perilously near generalisation. Yet, unless one draws decisively with broad bold strokes, any picture of India's millions is apt to become a dull mass of confused detail. Whether one's picture is "right" or "wrong" depends, perhaps, upon how it is judged: it might logically be argued that Frith was more definitely "right" about Derby Day than would have been,

say, Van Gogh: but Van Gogh's impression of the Derby, if you can possibly imagine such a thing, would probably have lasted longer than Frith's. I can only say that I have done my best to draw what I saw as well as I can.

To draw some such picture, tiresome as it may be, is necessary because the divisions of India provide the stock argument for the helpless, innocent immobility of the British Raj. It is a most persuasive argument: the idea that Britain has been and is pathetically striving to give India freedom, and is continually baulked in her good intentions by the failure of Indians to agree among themselves about anything, is one which to the average man supplies the perfect rationalisation, and justification of the British Raj. Faced by all these appalling complexities about Indian parties, he shakes his head and mutters "Well, we've done our best." It is also an argument which is likely to last well. nothing could be more improbable than that four hundred million people, in any part of the earth, should agree about everything and, whatever pious aspirations may be sincerely voiced, it cannot really be supposed that British political and economic interests will very actively bestir themselves to bring about an agreement which would remove their influence from four-fifths of the British Empire.

The trouble is that we are apt to be two-faced about the Indian business. That is not to blame, but rather to extenuate. we are for the most part unconscious of it. If the average Britisher, or even his average politician, is asked whether he desires India to be free, he will certainly reply in the affirmative, and quite sincerely mean it: yet somehow he isn't really thinking of freedom in terms of British freedom, but rather as a kind of gift we could *bestow* on India, as you might give a particularly juicy bone to a dog, the dog however remaining *your* dog. For the dog to walk out and buy a bone for himself, run an account with the butcher, and be independent of all bones, is unthinkable. Without being conscious hypocrites, we do not visualise, because we do not relish, the idea of an India with all the attributes of a sovereign state, capable of playing as great a part as Russia or America in world affairs. But, although we may not consciously be hypocrites, we do have a certain uneasy feeling that our attitude is not quite consistent with our professions of freedom. and we therefore seek instinctively to rationalise it by dwelling on India's "divisions," and her "defence," and ultimately the fact that on the whole, again like Hugh Walpole's book, she is happier with us.

But, as Gandhi has said, "either we recognise independence or we don't". freedom is indivisible. I have a sneaking admiration for the diehard who says bluntly that we should rule India with pomp and panache and a rod of iron: his is a perfectly intelligible, forthright, and in some ways logical attitude. I am not at all sure, surprising as it may sound in the context of this book, that India wouldn't be very well ruled, and possibly quite happy, if it were under an all-out, dominating, majestic Curzon-Churchill Raj. The ineluctable fact, however, is that the British have gone a step further, a step higher I think, than that kind of rule and nothing on earth is going to bring it back. If there is, or was, some case for India being ruled in a mighty magnificent princely manner, there is just no case at all for India being ruled by the rather shamefaced, but nevertheless leech-like Mr. Smith: Mr. Smith may turn India into a grey waste of mediocrity or be kicked out in the most undignified way. Circumstances have combined to make India's freedom from British subjection a matter only of time, and probably very little time: it is not

"unreasonable, I think, to hope that that freedom will come through Britain's own gesture, not a niggling nagging gesture of petulant insistence on constitutions and safeguards and ludicrous notions of continent-wide "agreement," but a heroic, imaginative, sweeping gesture which would wipe out bitterness for ever, and lay the foundations of lasting friendship and respect between India and Great Britain

If that is ever to happen, and the chances seem remote, it will happen only when the British people set their hearts on, and push their politicians and vested interests into, a noble gesture. And since, particularly in war time, British radio and the British press, with a few admirable exceptions, support the Government point of view on India, and soothe with a good dose of casuistry the conscience of England, it is of extreme importance that other voices should be raised and heard. It is in that belief that I, who vowed never to write a book on India have reluctantly put my awkward pen to this task in the hope that however inadequate it may be, it may here and there stir one or two of my countrymen to a realisation of the hatred which we are unnecessarily engendering and the friendship that we are steadily losing among the peoples of India

The average man, if he isn't going to be downed by government or diehard or big business spokesmen on the Indian question, must have an argument to put against the eternal argument that "India is divided." Here, as briefly as I can give it, it is

1. *Princes versus Provinces*

The Princes are extremely wealthy autocrats who are kept in power by Britain. Their riches, their form of rule, and their prestige are artificial and entirely out of keeping not only with the present world, but also with the ideals for which we are supposed to be fighting. Whether Britain chooses to continue protecting them or not, popular sentiment will not for much longer allow them to behave like so many little Tsars. They can, it is clear, still retain considerable authority in a free India if they adapt themselves to present conditions to cling to the British Raj for protection against the people of India is to invite their own absolute destruction. No matter what treaties Britain has signed with them in the past (and no matter how generous they have been, in their own interests, and with a mere fraction of their fortunes, in this war) no sane man can argue that their luxurious splendours should be allowed to stand between India and freedom. You cannot barter the destinies of four hundred million people for the jewels of six hundred kinglets. Britain must not protect them, if only because she cannot. The tide of events is running high against them. If they are worthy people, it is towards co-operation with their own people that they must now turn, not, like so many Quislings, towards protection against their own people by an alien power. The only real "division" which the Princes represent is a very inequitable division of wealth and they represent so minute a fraction of India that it would be more true to say that England is "divided" by her large landowners than that India is divided by her Princes. And if England's large landowners appealed to America for armed protection of their demesnes, we should hardly applaud it as an act of freedom.

2. *Minorities versus a Hindu Raj.*

The answers to this fall into two groups. First, there are minorities in all countries. But a "minority" of ninety millions, mostly martial and lusty people, is not easily going to be squashed. (What is much more likely

to be squashed is the pathetically weak minority of Eurasians whom we don't bother about at all, thus showing how much more we are concerned with power politics than protection.) A "Hindu Raj" would truly come into force only if the Hindu Mahasabha, the opposite number of the Muslim League and, like the League, opposed to the Congress, held power. The Congress has a Hindu bent, but to say that it represents an all-out Hindu Raj is as silly as to say that the Conservative Party represents only and exclusively the interests of the rich. The consistent Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly is in itself proof that the Congress is not aiming at any kind of totalitarian rule. The President of the Congress is himself a Muslim. Secondly, since Hindus *are* in a majority of three to one over Muslims, it is obvious that the British conception, of a *Central Government* elected by democratic methods will not work, though it may work all right for *Provincial Governments* in fairly homogeneous areas. (This again may depend on the redrawing of internal frontiers, to which I have referred.) Therefore, whatever shape Indians may eventually give, and they alone can give it, to a Federal Government at the Centre, it will have to start, as Sir George Schuster has suggested, *from the units of India instead of being imposed on them.* Here, then, is a perfect opportunity for saying: "If it is so difficult at any time, to form a Central Government, and if, as now is the case, the majority of Provincial Governments aren't functioning, and if, as it seems, you must have a strong Central Government in war time, isn't the whole thing hopeless, and hadn't we better carry on as we are?" And it's a jolly good persuasive argument. If you think, as the British Government seems to do, that the whole question of freedom can be shelved until the war is won, and reopened afterwards, you can accept it. But if you think, as I do, that it is vital to take the question of freedom along with, and as an essential part of, the war effort, you can't. Hitler can raise mercenaries in plenty—a good million of them, according to Stalin—from subjugated Europe, and we can raise mercenaries in plenty from subjugated India. Hitler can set up Quisling governments in Europe—so are we doing in India. Either we give freedom, or we join the ranks of the aggressors. The half-way house is a mirage. Hitler can say, with perfect plausibility, that France or Czecho-Slovakia or Yugoslavia is divided, and that, in the interests of European unity, he must have governments sympathetic to the Reich. We can, with equal plausibility, say that we must have an Indian Government sympathetic to the British. Neither is freedom, both represent aggression and domination. If Hitler were to give full power once again to the elected representatives of Norway, would it not be an act of freedom? Why, then, should we copy Hitler's example and throw the elected representatives of India into jail? Or, to put it more bluntly, the elected representatives of the particular Indian party which most and longest of all has fought for Indian freedom and disputed our claim to dominate? The elected Prime Ministers of the eleven Provinces of India still exist, even if five are interned; can it seriously be held that they would not constitute at the very least a better starting-point for Indian national government than the present British-nominated advisers to the Viceroy? There is but one possible excuse for sending India's elected representatives to jail, and appointing in their place nominees who are at least first cousins to Major Quisling—and that excuse is that India's elected representatives would sabotage the war effort. Are there grounds for this? Well, it comes down to—

3. *Materialism versus Spiritualism or War versus Peace.*

I hope that I have made Gandhi's views clear, as far as I am able to do so. He himself believes in non-violent resistance—don't forget that that does mean *resistance*. He believes that absolute unflagging unafraid moral and spiritual resistance can count for more, in the long run, than the temporary victory or defeat of arms. But in spite of this he has raised no objection to the presence of the United Nations' troops in India, *if* India is a free and equal ally and he has stated that in any Indian National Government he would be in a minority of one on the non-violence issue. The Congress Working Committee has again and again declared itself against Axis aggression and Axis domination—it was more alive to them, I can vouch, in the years immediately preceding the war, than Britain was. Jawaharlal Nehru, when in Rome, deliberately refused the invitation of Mussolini—a thing that I can't remember any British politician doing. It is simply fanciful to suppose that the Congress party, whose obsession is aggression, would not resist it tooth and nail from any quarter. But suppose—this is the hardest supposition for any Britisher, the biggest hurdle, the hurdle which I am nevertheless going to go for—suppose that India has no Axis aggression to resist. Suppose that India is perfectly free from British Imperialism, and is a nation like Switzerland or Sweden or Turkey or Egypt (which has not declared war). Do we sneer at Turkey or Egypt* or Sweden or Switzerland because they are neutral? Why—unless we regard it simply as a bastion for British domination, a domination which isn't going to be given up—should we sneer at a neutral India? What has India got to gain by sacrificing her sons and her wealth—if it is only a choice between domination by an Asiatic or European power? What "possessions" is *she* fighting for, save the possession of her own lands and simple life in peace—which the Axis may not necessarily want to take away? Might not an Indian quite reasonably argue, as Turkey does, that this quarrel is none of his making, that he is not seeking to guard the doubtful possessions of Empire, and that he will resist when attacked, but not otherwise? I put these arguments before you, not because I think that India would use them—for it is clear enough that India, whatever she may think about the British Raj, will not let China down—but because the festering sore of the Viceroy's declaration of war without India's consent must be healed before India can harness her full, immense resources with real enthusiasm and belief in the United Nations' cause. The concept of war for India is Holy War, undertaken not to grasp ill-gotten gains or to secure new domination, but to resist aggression whatever its form may be. Can we not respect it? If we can, we need not bother at all about.

4. *The town and the village, or*

5. *The racial and linguistic divisions,*
because those will be settled by India herself and are none of our business. India free can be India magnificent; India unfree can be only, to herself, angry humiliation; to the United Nations, lasting shame.

CHAPTER XII

Many people are puzzled, and not unjustifiably, by the Indian demand for Independence in the full sense of that word, and by India's absolute

*See note page 85.

rejection of the goal of Dominion Status—a goal apparently satisfying enough to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Indian intolerance of that aim has come to the fore (and indeed reached a pitch of fury in the Nationalist ranks) only quite recently and because the Cripps offer, whatever may be said, did represent—on account of its conditions regarding the Princes and the secession of States or Provinces from any Indian Union—something much more like Dominion Status than Independence, it is worth looking at the possible causes of this attitude.

On the face of it, it would seem that India has much to gain from Dominion Status. As a self-governing member of a commonwealth of nations, she would clearly be more powerful and better defended than standing alone. Needing every penny she can raise for the improvement of her agriculture, housing, and health, she would be largely spared, through inter-commonwealth security, the crippling burden of modern armaments. As members of the British Commonwealth, Indians would have the right to trade and travel in vast areas of the world. And the apparent satisfaction and prosperity of the other great Dominions would seem to point a happy moral.

Let us go back a little. The Indian National Congress, which met for the first time in Bombay in 1885, grew out of the Indian Association established by Surendranath Banerjee in Calcutta in July 1876. Surendranath, who had been greatly stirred by the example of Mazzini and the unification of Italy, was determined to do the same for his country. "It was not enough that we should have our full share of the higher offices, but we aspired to have a voice in the councils of the nation." We not only wanted to be members of the bureaucracy and to leave it with the Indian element, but we looked forward to controlling it, shaping and guiding its measures, and eventually bringing the entire administration under complete popular control. But though the Indian Association aimed thus high, a break with Britain was unthinkable enough for the Chairman of the Indian National Congress (Dadabhai Naoroji) to declare in 1886: "Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government, or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? There can be but one answer—because we are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us, of which the very existence of this Congress is a proof in a nutshell. Were it not for these blessings of British rule I could not have come here today as I have done, without the least hesitation and without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed during my absence, nor could you have come from every corner of the land, having performed, within a few days, journeys which in former days would have occupied months. But there remain even greater blessings for which we have to be grateful. It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess."^{*}

Much later, Sir Surendranath Banerjee—the same Surendranath, now Leader of the Moderates,—could speak of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms thus: "Taking the Report as a whole, I think it must be conceded that it affords a striking illustration of a change in the angle of vision on the part of our rulers, and I venture to assert that it ought to be accompanied by a similar transformation in our attitude in regard to

^{*}*A Nation in the Making*. Sir Surendranath Banerjee, p. 81.

[†]*India*. Sir Valentine Chirol, p. 90.

the Government of the country . . . They have now stretched out to us the hand of fellowship and friendship, and I invite my countrymen to grasp it with alacrity and enthusiasm, and in co-operation with British statesmanship to march forward to the accomplishment of those high destinies which, under the providence of God, are reserved for our people."* And even Gandhi could write "My prayer is that India may represent the co-operation of all the peoples of the world . . . The present attempt to separate our spirit from that of the Occident is a tentative if spiritual suicide . . . We of the Orient should learn from the Occident

To say that it is wrong to co-operate with the West is to encourage the worst form of provincialism and can produce nothing but intellectual indigence."†

Only about ten years later, from the Chair of the Indian Congress at Lahore, Jawaharlal Nehru was declaring "Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British Imperialism . . . The embrace of the British Empire is a dangerous thing. It is not, and cannot be, the life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that it will be what it has been in the past—the embrace of death . . . We have had much controversy about independence and Dominion Status and we have quarrelled about words. But the real thing is the conquest of power by whatever name it may be called. I do not think that any form of Dominion Status applicable to India will give us real power . . . This Congress has not acknowledged and will not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to dictate to us in any way. To it we make no appeal."

There can be little doubt that India as a whole applauded these sentiments then, and echoes them much more violently today. How has this hostility to the British connection become so marked, when that "hand of fellowship and friendship" might once, it seems, have been gratefully accepted?

Of course the change can be ascribed to many causes, not least among them the growth and contagion of nationalism, together with the development of industrialization, throughout the world. But four main causes, I fancy, are the chief contributors.

The first was the failure of British promises made during the four years war. Whatever those promises may now be judged to mean, whatever the difficulties of carrying them into effect, there can be little doubt that the post-war years brought sharp disillusionment to India. "The racial pride of the Indian peoples was naturally enhanced by the achievements of Indian Troops during the Great War; and at its close Indian politicians were looking for a liberal reward for the services rendered by their country to the cause of the Allies. They expected to receive a large measure of self-government. To them it seemed that the Government replied with a slap on the face when it passed the Rowlatt Acts which gave the Executive powers to intern without public trial all suspected of being implicated in the Revolutionary movement. Indians had expected that all such drastic measures would be withdrawn when peace was signed. The Rowlatt Acts, therefore, provoked widespread resentment . . . ‡ The Satyagraha movement followed: the Treaty of Sevres inflamed Muslim

* *A Nation in the Making*, p. 311

† *Mahatma Gandhi*, Romain Rolland, p. 102.

‡ *Contemporary Thought of India*, A. C. Underwood, p. 45

feeling in India. on August 1, 1920 the Non-Co-operation movement was launched. Hostility to Britain was in full flood.

Secondly, the emergence of Russia had had a tremendous impact on the Indian mind. Tsarist Russia seemed to many Indians to have had much in common with their own country—size, poverty, illiteracy, and tyrannic domination among other things: yet here was a country which had successfully defied the intervention of Europe and had taken immense strides towards a self-respecting form of life which would be equally suitable to India. Communist propaganda, and the suppression of it by India's rulers, also played a part in recommending the Russian experiment to the frustrated feelings of India.

Thirdly, the question of the Imperial Army in India and its demand on the Indian budget, had become a political sore. It is a question on which reasonable arguments can be brought forward by both sides, but in so far as it exacerbated (or was used as a stick by) Indian opinion, it is sufficient here to indicate the extreme point of view, i.e. that the Indian taxpayer was called upon to support—to the extent of nearly half the Central Budget—an army which was not, nor likely to be, controlled by Indians in spite of their undoubted valour, and that India, particularly the North West Frontier, was used as a convenient training-ground and barracks for soldiers whose main business was not the defence of India but its domination, and the protection of British vested interests both in India and throughout the East. Anyone who has had any dealings with the narrow resources of Indian budgets, and has also witnessed the real desire, of Indian ministers to improve the standards of education and health, cannot fail to understand the rage which military expenditure might not unnaturally arouse.

Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, Indians had had, and continued to have, a bad deal in the British Empire. "Chance rather than set purpose frustrated the many tentative suggestions for the introduction of Indian indentured immigrants into Australia, and the closing of the Commonwealth to Indian immigration was in a considerable measure due, not to feeling against Indians, but to objections to the Chinese and Japanese."

In their decision that only by preventing Indian competition could they secure for themselves the high wages which they desired, together with reductions in hours of labour no doubt correct, so far as their personal interests were concerned. . . . In New Zealand the movement against Asiatic immigration, directed against Chinese and Japanese and only in minor degree Indians, was contemporaneous with that in the Commonwealth. It became specifically anti-Indian only in 1919, and it cannot be denied that the pressure of competition from Indians would be of the most serious kind, and in the circumstances it is not surprising that public opinion is unanimous in opposition to Indian immigration. . . . Canada, unhappily, has had an unfortunate record in her dealings with the problem. The motive again was predominantly economic. . . . Indians have fared worse than Japanese, and this fact has unquestionably been the cause of serious friction. . . . It is admitted in the Dominion that the preference existing under the present arrangements for Japan is open to objection, but the possibility of relaxation of restrictions may be deemed negligible."

"While the small numbers of the Indians in Canada render the issue one of academic rather than of practical importance, the issue in the Union of South Africa involves large numbers of Indians, and deeply

affects inter-imperial relations. The essential fact, of course, is that in Natal the Indian population was deliberately introduced in order to build up the prosperity of the country by the use of indentured labour at a time when no other form of labour was obtainable, and that by now the Indians of Natal are largely descendants of those who stayed on with the permission, if not encouragement, of the Natal Government. . . In the Transvaal the issue is complicated by the fact that the Government of the South African Republic took measures to restrict the activities of Indians as early as 1885, when was passed the famous law preventing their holding of land. . . The policy of the Government became increasingly dominated by the desire to induce the Indians resident in the Union to leave the territory, and for this purpose a series of measures were devised. The object to be attained was to be promoted by restricting drastically the possibility of the grant to Indians of licenses for petty trade in which they largely engage, and by secluding Indians in locations where they would in effect be restricted to trade with one another. Indians were included in the scope of the measure known as the Colour Bar Bill, which, as passed into law, enables the Government to exclude Indians with other non-European peoples from any form of skilled occupation if it so decides. **

I have quoted these passages from Sir Arthur Berriedale Keith's essay on "India in the Empire" partly because he will scarcely be accused of any anti-Imperialist feeling by the Blimpiest of Blimps, and partly because the conditions which he describes are not likely to be much alleviated in the grimmer economic struggles which are likely to follow the present war. In the same essay he writes: "Nor, unfortunately, is friction absent from British relations with India on this score. It is true that the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State place no difficulties in the way of Indian visitors,† nor do they hinder permanent settlement, though that is not very often desired. But the Government of the United Kingdom is necessarily answerable for the position in Kenya, and its whole power of suasion has failed to satisfy Indian opinion that the Indians in that colony have received treatment on a just footing. The issue is complicated by the fact that in the adjacent territory of Tanganyika, under mandate—as opposed to sovereignty—the Indians stand on a perfect footing of equality with immigrants of every other country which is a member of the League of Nations, and differential legislation against them is contrary to the spirit of the mandate and even to its terms."

The last phrase is particularly revealing. Not inside, but outside, the British Empire do Indians receive equal treatment. And inside that Empire, what? Repressive legislation, colour-bar bills, ejection from land, promises unfulfilled. Put yourself in the place of the Indian, apply to yourself the facts quoted in this chapter, and ask yourself whether you would be anxious to be a member of any "Commonwealth" which treated you thus. If your answer is in the negative, as I think an Indian answer well might be, remember that it carries with it the implication that Dominion Status is not applicable to India, and that, as a corollary, the abolition of a Viceroy or Governor-General as well as the removal of the India Office, must be part and parcel of any decent solution of the Indian problem.

**India in the Empire*: Prof. Sir Arthur Berriedale Keith, *India Analyzed* Gollancz.

†But the hotels, restaurants, flats and boarding houses of England certainly do!

CHAPTER XIII

I come now to the Cripps mission and the impasse which has followed it. If I have come anywhere near my intention in the preceding sections of this book, you will already have some idea why the Cripps mission was bound, within its terms of reference, to come to grief.

Sir Stafford Cripps is a strangely enigmatic figure. I met him first when I was secretary to his father, Lord Parmoor, in the first Labour Government. In those days, eighteen years ago, he used occasionally to warm himself at my fire while waiting to see Father. The impression I had of him at that time, when I was young and perhaps silly, as I may be still, was of a didactic, prosperous, portly lawyer. I did not like him—I thought him conceited and unsympathetic. Probably I was quite wrong, but that was my feeling. I did not meet him again until he came to India in 1939. I found him then slim, sincere, earnest, and of extreme charm. He did and said exactly the right thing, touched the right chords, was the very pattern of the perfect, dreamed-of, representative of England's best. His visit filled me with immense hope and pleasure. He seemed the Heavensent purgative of India's constipation. When he went to India again in 1942, I drove my pen as eloquently as I was able in his praise. * I did not think much of the "terms" which he took, but I never for one instant doubted that he, knowing India, had a good deal more up his sleeve. I could scarcely believe my ears when I heard his final broadcast, announcing his return. I went to see him after he got back, and came away puzzled. I cannot now tell whether Cripps is a sincere man ensnared by power, or a careerist who tries to use Russia, India, or Christianity in the service of his ambition. Certainly for me he remains an enigma.

The Cripps proposals were, briefly.

1. British control of the defence of India during the war.
 2. Responsibility of "the Government of India" (whatever that might mean; presumably the British Raj) with the "co-operation of the peoples of India," for "organizing to the full the moral, military and material resources of India."
 3. A post-dated cheque for "framing a new constitution after the war": a constitution from which any Province or State might secede at will, and make a separate agreement with the British Government.
- A Magna Carta? A Declaration of Independence? A Bill of Rights? A gift of freedom? Well—I ask you.

Nevertheless, the Cripps proposals, as they stood, were a great advance on anything that had gone before. I thought at the time, and I still think, that the acceptance of them would have led to better things, and that the results of acceptance would have been better than Indian leaders visualised. There were, perhaps, three main reasons for their non-acceptance. First and foremost, they were made at a time when Britain was obviously hard-pressed, and feared the invasion of India by Japan, and they therefore presented themselves to Indian minds as measures of grudging expediency rather than measures of generosity: secondly, they were in the main only promises for the future and not acts in the present, and India has not done very well out of past promises: thirdly, as I guess, and it is only a guess, Sir Stafford Cripps tried, at some point, to put on the screw too hard and too quickly: he came dangerously near to Hitler's "my patience is at an end," and that doesn't work in India.

* *The Key of India*, Observer, March 15, 1942.
Ally or Overlord? Observer, April 5, 1942.

Mr. Graham Spry, a Canadian who acted as one of Sir Stafford's secretaries during the negotiations, writes in his introduction to a summary* of the proposals "This document provides that not Englishmen in England, or Englishmen in India, but Indians themselves in India should determine their own constitutional powers and their relations with other States. Upon the powers of either the constitution-making body or of the proposed Indian Union, there were imposed no restrictions whatever." Mr. Spry is a sincere man, and I have no doubt that he believes that statement to be true—but it is in fact another example of self-justification. "Indians in India" could not, in the first place, "determine their own constitutional powers" until after the war—if, then, they had been good boys, they were to have an election by methods determined by the British, and from that election their "constitution-making body"—was formed, the Princes being allowed to "appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as British India". If that constitution-making body could come to any conclusion, it had to negotiate with Britain "a Treaty which . . . will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands—it will make provision . . . for the protection of racial and religious minorities". His Majesty's Government would "accept and implement the constitution thus framed *subject only* to the right of any Province . . . that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain *its present constitutional position*" and "whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements".

What a bone, what a very very conditioned bone, to offer to the dear dog! Indians to remain virtual slaves during the war to have their "constitution-making body" elected afterwards under British auspices (or at any rate with British-imposed limitations) to have in that body a large representation of autocrats to draw up a constitution knowing that any Province or State could refuse it, and make a separate treaty with an outside power to acknowledge that the "protection of racial and religious minorities" was not their affair, but the affair of an alien power. Could any "constitution-making body" make a constitution under such conditions? Or rather, could it hope to, if by any chance Britain decided, at the end of the war, really to implement her promises as she had not done before?

And Mr. Spry says "no restrictions whatsoever"!

Just imagine, if nothing else, the "restrictions" which could be imposed by a Treaty wide enough to "cover all matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility"—what guarantee was there that this, with a possible Imperialist Government once again in the saddle after the war, would not mean a repetition of abortive Round Table Conferences, and the ultimate refusal of Britain, as after the last war, to part with power?

This was the setting for the Cripps mission. Knowing him and believing in him as I did, I felt convinced that these proposals represented, so to speak, a "top price," and that Sir Stafford was permitted and prepared to go down a few points in the traditional manner of the Orient. His first broadcast from New Delhi, given on March 30th, 1942, supported this belief except for one horrible sentence—which might then, possibly,

**International Conciliation*. Published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. No. 381 June 1942 (405, West 117 Street, N.Y.C.)

still have been construed as a bit of hard bargaining, had it been a little less intractable. In the first part of the broadcast, Sir Stafford said all the right things, notably—"It is for the Indian people, *and not for any outside authority*, to decide under which of these forms India will in the future govern herself. If the Indian people ask our help it will, of course, be gladly given. But it is for you, the Indian people, to discuss and decide upon your future constitution. We shall *look on with deep interest* and hope that your wisdom will guide you truly in this great adventure." What could be fairer? What could be more hopeful? Had not the grand, the noble gesture come at last? And he continued "It is not for us Britishers to dictate to you, the Indian people. You will work out and decide your problem for yourselves." But then, suddenly, a new and threatening chord was struck, an amazing dissonance "*We are now giving the lead which has been asked for, and it is in the hands of the Indians, and the Indians only, whether they will accept that lead*." If they fail to accept this *opportunity*, the responsibility for that failure must rest with them. Our proposals are definite and precise. *If they were to be rejected by the leaders of Indian opinion, there will be neither the time nor the opportunity to reconsider this matter till after the war.*"

Poor dog! Poor bone! Poor India! Might not the head of an Indian listener, hearing this speech for the defence so abruptly telescoped into a speech for the prosecution, tend to swim? Might not millions of Indian listeners and readers, at this critical moment of the opening of negotiations, murmur, "Ah! so there's a catch in it after all! We, the Indian people, were to decide they, the British, were not going to dictate *but if we don't decide as they dictate*, it's all up!" Was there anything magnificent, anything noble, anything faintly resembling "freedom" in this "offer" not only conditioned in itself, but carrying the threat of extended domination in the event of its non-acceptance—even in the event of argument about its "precise and definite" terms?

Is this a fair criticism? I think it is fair to assume that many Indians must have felt something of the kind, and that the threat, connoting as it did the usual English inability to refrain from patronising India, raised an immediate resistance in many Indian minds, and paved the way to trouble. And because I think that this *feeling* was probably the first important impact of the Cripps mission on India—more important, in the long run, than the *facts* of the proposals themselves—I have so far deliberately omitted one point which appears in both the proposals and the broadcast. That is that the "constitution-making body" should be composed as the British directed, *unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities*. This, on the face of it, seems a magnificently generous offer, an offer so flushed with freedom that—well, really, what more could you want?

Yes; but what does this "offer" really boil down to? However much "the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities" might agree, four things remained constant, viz (1) the heavy representation of the unrepresentative Princes; (2) the Treaty "covering all necessary matters" to be made with Britain; (3) the provision for the protection, by British guns, of "racial and religious minorities," and (4) the right of any State or Province, again with the help of British guns, to secede from any Union. It is obvious that any "constitution-making body" limited by such conditions would be a farce from the outset, and that its very

establishment would set in motion all the forces of disunity: and thus the apparently generous offer to allow a "change of form" becomes, in fact, one of those meaningless phrases which suggest a Machiavellian British policy of Divide-and-Rule.

The cartoons which appeared in the Indian Press during the Cripps mission, cartoons which give a very different picture from that presented to the British public by the British Press, are an eloquent testimony to the feelings that prevailed. And feelings, or "atmosphere," may prove more important than facts. In this atmosphere, then—undoubtedly an atmosphere of suspicion and even hostility, evoked by the "post-dated cheque", the sense that Japanese aggression, not British generosity, was the moving factor; and the menacing "take-it-or-leave-it" condition—the negotiations opened.

The first shots were fired by the Sikhs, the Depressed Classes, and the Congress.

There are about five million Sikhs, and being a small minority, they are inclined to shout louder and quicker than anybody and, true to type, they had their letter in to Sir Stafford before anybody else. To it they appended a long and, it must be admitted, impressive account of themselves, dwelling particularly on their unfair minority treatment in contrast to their services, particularly in the last war, when they contributed 89,000 men, a larger proportion than any other community in India. They plumped at once for non-acceptance of the Cripps proposals for the immediate transfer of power to Indian hands, and, somewhat ironically, for "safeguards" ensuring that quite a nice bit of that power should be in Sikh hands. The effect on India of this first reply cannot be assessed, but it seems probable that phrases such as "immediate transfer of power," "vivisection of India," "recourse to arbitration," and so on, were calculated to increase anxiety and suspicion about the proposals.

Next, on April 1st, came the Depressed Classes, represented by Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Raja, saying quite briefly that the proposals were unacceptable to them, as implying "an unmitigated system of Hindu rule." The Depressed Classes are the lowest rung—or more correctly beneath the lowest rung—of the Hindu caste system, untouchables or outcasts, mainly engaged in menial duties. In the cause of politics and progress (and I must add that mass conversion by Christian missionaries has had a nasty finger in the pie) they have been awakened to the idea that they might better their lot by various means. They are for the most part ignorant and illiterate and therefore malleable—the pawns on the political chessboard. Gandhi has probably done more for them than any man, but the last thing he would have done would be to make them into a "division" or dissident minority. I have only once met Dr. Ambedkar, and I am sure that his work for the Depressed Classes has been sincere and good; yet I cannot altogether resist the impression that Dr. Ambedkar has installed himself in comfortable control of a dumb but useful political counterweight, with which he can advantageously and deliciously flirt now with the Congress, now with Jinnah, now with the British Raj. The Congress obviously would have none of him—since they wished the Depressed Classes to remain within the framework of Indian unity—and there came a time when Dr. Ambedkar, very oddly, came down in favour of Jinnah's Pakistan: there came another when he, also oddly, joined the Viceroy's Council.

I have touched on these two replies because they came first, and doubtless had their effect on Indian opinion. The reply of the Congress Working Committee, the reply that really mattered and upon which the negotiations hung (with due apologies to Mr. Churchill who afterwards seemed to think that the Congress represented nothing at all*), was not released until April 11th, although Sir Stafford Cripps had it on April 2nd. you must remember, therefore, that while other replies were, so to speak, doing their turns before the curtain, the main act was being prepared behind the scenes. The Congress had already, before March 30th, fastened on Clause (e)—which defined the war period and particularly the question of defence—as the main bone of contention, dismissing “the uncertain future” and its highly-conditioned promises. So, between March 30th and April 4th, letters were exchanged between Sir Stafford Cripps and the President of the Congress (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad), in which Cripps suggested a meeting with Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief, so that the President might “make suggestions” and the C-in-C might “explain . . . the technical difficulties.” There is nothing in these letters to reflect on Cripps’ entire sincerity, but they do to some extent reflect on his tact and arrangements. There was no question of Sir Archibald Wavell meeting the President: it was a question of the President meeting His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief “if he were prepared to attend such a meeting” and at the time that would suit His Excellency. And that His Excellency suited himself is clear from the comment in a very short letter from the President: “I had gathered the impression that we were likely to meet the Commander-in-Chief some time to-day and we had arranged our programme accordingly, but as this is not convenient to him we shall meet him to-morrow at 6 p.m. as suggested and reach your house at 5-50 p.m.” Small straws perhaps quite enough in India to indicate the beginnings of a breeze of irritation.

Meanwhile, another actor had appeared before the curtain, this time the Hindu Mahasabha, which issued its reply to the proposals on April 3rd. The Hindu Mahasabha is an important body of forty years standing, representing orthodox Hinduism and Hindu India. Its reply was dignified and impressive: it rejected the proposals, maintaining, like the Congress later, that the real question was whether England was willing to part with power: that India must be declared an independent nation: that the plan for the control of defence was unacceptable: that no “constitution-making body” could be elected on the basis of communal electorates.

On April 7th came the reply of the Moderates—the nice, gentle, “elder-statesmen” Liberals of India, represented by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar. While not entirely rejecting the proposals, or at least not saying so, they dwelt, with the greatest courtesy and at considerable length, on the absolute necessity of putting the control of defence under an Indian Minister, on the apparent lack of any real change in the constitution during the war, and on the danger of “breaking up the integrity of the country” by allowing States and Provinces to vote themselves out of the Union.

So now there were four replies—Sikhs, Depressed Classes, Hindu Mahasabha, and Moderates—and all were unfavourable. The impression of the week, including the Cripps broadcast, was clearly one of deterioration. The results of the week were, equally clearly, that the whole stress

*See *The Ptime Minister on India* Published by the India League, 165 Strand, 2d.

of Indian opinion was being laid on two points only—the *immediate* transfer of power, and the control of defence. Cripps had the doubtless unenviable task of tackling these two points. Did he know, even then, that he could not do so? Yet, knowing India, could he ever have supposed that they would not inevitably be his main hurdles?

Whatever the effect on Indian opinion of the first four replies—and it must also be remembered that, at such a feverish time of crisis, comings and goings of the Commander-in-Chief, words dropped by Congress leaders, or Cripps, or members of the entourage of any, could not pass unnoticed—India still awaited, with growing concern, the two chief actors—the Congress and the Muslim League. And Jinnah, quite obviously, was going into purdah until the Congress showed its hand. So, while we wait, a word about Jinnah. The Muslims have beyond doubt a healthy case for opposing a permanent Hindu majority: whether Jinnah has a healthy case for behaving as he does is another question. Jinnah is a man of great charm and magnetism; faultlessly dressed, wealthy, sharp-tongued, he has more in common with the European political careerist than with the Indian politician. He was once a member of the Congress: and who more bitter than the renegade? He obviously enjoys being a Führer—which of us doesn't? To make any sort of peace with the Congress, to admit any sort of Coalition Government—unless he himself controlled it—would be a step down from his present position as overlord and symbol of ninety million people. I do not want to attribute deliberate sabotage to Jinnah: his honesty is proverbial; but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, owing to his personality and position, he is constantly, if unconsciously, endeavouring to keep the pot of "division" on the boil.

While matters were thus shaping themselves, another item was being added to Indian meditations. A sea of refugees had poured over the frontiers of Burma, and rumour had it not only that Europeans had received highly preferential treatment during this evacuation, but also that Indians in Burma had been gracelessly left to the mercies of the Japanese while all available cars and aeroplanes were put at the white man's disposal. Accurate or not, the impression spread like a forest fire: only one correspondent, Philip Jordan, had the sense, as far as I know, to realise how bitterly this might affect the negotiations.

On April 5th I wrote in the *Observer*—and the reader will please forgive my desire to record it here—"The transfer of power is still a promise, not a performance, and India is wary of promises. It is very reasonable for British politicians to assume that the direction of the war must remain in British hands* that is our habitual mode of thought. We should consider without rancour the equivalent assumption of Indian politicians that they—whether or not they employ an alien Commander-in-Chief—should exercise at least over those manifold popular responsibilities which go with defence that same control which is exercised by their colleagues in Britain, America, Russia and China. If they are excluded from such control, the argument that Britain is overlord and not ally, and that future promises will prove but a dusty answer, must inevitably

*In case any persevering person looks up my article and must here see that, in the article written on March 15th under the title *The Key of the Door: One Man and his Mission* the words "It is, of course, mere common sense that the direction and control of defence must, while the war lasts, remain in British hands" were inserted by the Editor without my knowledge or permission. That is one of the things which have happened since.

gain ground. Since this is likely to prove the crux of the immediate problem, we must go one step further. India, foolishly or no, has historic precedents for believing that she can absorb an invader, India has, for many years now, been impressed by the *type* of resistance offered by her neighbour, China." (And here I added "India has not been impressed by the resistance offered by the British in Malaya and Burma" but the Editor cut it out) "Rightly or wrongly—and who shall prophesy in this unpredictable war?—India may feel that the East, fighting in the East, can at least provide useful advice to the West. India's leaders can, if they so decide, muster willing human material in greater strength than that of all the Allied armies, outside China, put together shall they muster it for direction by generals over whom they have no control, and with whose methods they may, rightly or wrongly, disagree?"

The meeting between the President of the Congress and His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, which took place at 6 p.m. on April 5th, was, as you might expect, a flop. The President it may be assumed, saw a red-tabbed officer who was determined to keep control of defence. The General saw an Indian who presumed to question his right to command. Or perhaps the meeting never took place at all. History does not as far as I know actually record anything but the arrangements for it. The only comment on its occurrence or non-occurrence is that of Cripps, in his letter to the President two days later. "I have explained to you the technical difficulties with regard to the position of the Commander-in-Chief and will not here reiterate them." Incident closed. His Excellency clearly remained His Excellency. But Sir Stafford was not defeated. He now proposed a division of defence responsibilities, some of which would be given to an Indian Minister, while another Indian would be appointed to sit in the War Cabinet. Well played, sir! A generous offer! No—on closer examination, decidedly no. The Commander-in-Chief was to remain, whatever happened, in charge of the "War Department," which included such minor matters as sanctioning all proposals emanating from General, Naval and Air Headquarters, representing the policy of Government on *all questions connected with the war* which originate in or concern those Headquarters, acting as the channel of communication between the Government of India and H.M.G. on all such questions, and even acting as liaison between those Headquarters and other Departments of Government, and Provincial Governments. Those little matters having been safely booked by the War Department, there would be a nice new "Defence Department," and at its head an Indian Minister would proudly preside over such major considerations as K.G.R.I.M. schools, stationery, printing and forms, reception, accommodation and social arrangements for foreign visitors, as well as amenities and canteens, and—good Heavens!—demobilisation and post-war reconstruction. Well, well—surely that's good enough for an Indian?

It decidedly wasn't.

That is one way of putting it. It is only fair to add that perhaps, things being what they were, it should have been good enough for a wise Indian. The Congress argument that Indian opinion could be effectively mobilised only by a National Government and a sense of immediate Freedom, and that anything which stopped short of it would be useless, was undoubtedly a strong one. But there had been, according to Sir Stafford's letter to the President on April 10th, offers—verbal offers presumably, since they appear nowhere else on paper—to hand over to "representa-

tive Indians" (a phrase, of course, which might be suspect to the Congress when used by the British) the portfolios of Home, Communications, Finance, Supply, Information and Civil Defence. This, taken even with the rather crippled "Defence Department," was a hefty offer. It did, and does seem to imply that Indian Ministers, had they seized the opportunity offered, would have been—even though for a time they might have had to put up with considerable difficulties from the Viceroy and his overriding powers, the Civil Servants and the dictatorial War Department—in a position of great strength and influence. Yet that again is not a true picture. In the same letter (April 10th) Sir Stafford wrote as follows: "You suggest 'a truly National Government' be formed which must be 'Cabinet Government with full power.' Without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale this would not be possible as you realise."

To this point—perhaps the fundamental one—the President of the Congress made careful, and I think eloquent, replies in his letters of April 10th and 11th. "The Committee," he wrote, "do not think that there is any inherent difficulty in the way of constitutional changes during the war. Everything that helps in the war not only can be but must be done with speed. That is the only way to carry on and win a war. No complicated enactments are necessary. A recognition of India's freedom and right to self-determination could easily be made if it was so wished, together with certain other consequential but important changes. The rest can be left to future arrangements and adjustments. I might remind you that the British Prime Minister actually proposed a union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France. No greater or more fundamental change could be imagined, and this was suggested at a period of grave crisis and peril. War accelerates change. It does not fit in with static conceptions. The peril that faces India affects us more than it can possibly affect any foreigner, and we are anxious and eager to do our utmost to face it and overcome it. But we cannot undertake responsibilities when we are not given the freedom and power to shoulder them effectively, and when an old environment continues which hampers the national effort. While we cannot accept the proposals you have made, we want to inform you that we are yet *prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly National Government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future*. But in the present the National Government must be a Cabinet Government with full power, and must not be merely a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council (April 10th). It seems that there has been a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude as our negotiations proceeded. What we were told in our very first talk with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-à-vis* his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office you told me that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions Office. The whole of this picture which you sketched before us has now been completely shattered by what you told us at our last interview" (April 11th.)

What Cripps told them was that it was out of the question to have a Cabinet "presumably nominated by the major political organisations"

which would be "responsible to no one but itself" and would constitute "an absolute dictatorship." He also added that the Congress had made no suggestion for a change in the constitution "until last night" (April 9th). These arguments seem surprisingly feeble. A Cabinet "nominated by the major political organisations" would be a Coalition cabinet such as we have in England. Some minorities would have disliked it, as some do in England: there was no earthly reason why it shouldn't have been "responsible" to a Central Legislative Assembly—either that already existent, or a new one elected by the Provincial Governments. It could not for one single second be held that a Cabinet nominated by the major political parties would be *more* of a dictatorship than the absolutely unrepresentative and dictatorial Viceroy's Council. And for Cripps to argue that the Congress party "had only raised the issue last night" when they had been steadily shouting it for about twenty-five years is something to make one wonder whether Cripps had been driven into prevarication by earlier over-expansive statements, or whether he had already thrown in his hand and was no longer seriously trying to adapt himself to Indian views. It was obvious that the end was at hand, and it now came—from Sir Stafford—with shattering velocity. On the day following the President's statement that the Congress was still prepared to shoulder responsibility provided that a National Government was formed, Cripps issued a Press Statement, and broadcast, to the effect that negotiations were at an end and the Declaration was withdrawn (April 11th). Thus ended the hopes of friendship and co-operation with a free and grateful India: thus began the new era of domination by imprisonment and arrest.

How difficult, in such cases, to assess blame. In these great political whirlwinds a man, or men, may be pushed this way and that by circumstances so trivial that, in the general dust-up, they are unrecognised. "Past distrust," said Sir Stafford in his broadcast, "has proved too strong to allow of present agreement." Perhaps that played a part. Perhaps the failure of British arms played a part. Perhaps unfair treatment in the Burma evacuation played a part. Perhaps the combination of dry lawyer and idealist in Cripps—promising too much at first, taking back too much afterwards—played a part. Perhaps the long-pent-up inferiority complex of India, the passionate desire to be free, the mistrust of "promises," played a part. Perhaps Axis propaganda—spread over several years—played a part. Perhaps Mr. Churchill played a part.

But the part of Cripps still remains mysterious. He set out—and set out grandly—as the champion of Indian freedom. Why did he abandon it? For abandon it he certainly did. Nobody could have been a more fervent admirer of Cripps and his mission than I: nobody, I think, could have felt more strongly that he was determined to succeed, and would succeed. But in ten days he had abandoned the cause. Had he said "I will stay in India, even if I fail, and work for success"—had he said "I have failed and I will not return to power until India is free"—then, how doubly great one's admiration might have been, how tremendous the effect on India! But no—Whitehall still remained a magnet to this champion of freedom, who actually said, in the House of Commons, on October 26th, 1939:

"The present deadlock is due to the uncompromising attitude of the British Government and not to Congress, which is putting forward the just demands of the Indian people . . . If the British Government is fighting

for democracy, *imperialism must end in India*. . . The Viceroy's suggestion of a consultative committee chosen and convoked by himself is *nothing but an insult to the Indian people, who demand the right of self-determination*. The argument that self-government is impossible in India because of the communal difficulty *is invalid*."

What has occurred to change that view? Or is Sir Stafford still biding his time? To me, I confess, it seemed shocking that, when machine-guns were once again being used on Indian crowds, and flogging re-instituted, Sir Stafford should preach Christianity at the Albert Hall—while Mr Churchill, at the first flush of victory, proclaimed at the Mansion House

"Let me, however, make this clear, in case there should be any mistake about it in any quarter. We mean to hold our own. (Loud cheers) I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

"We hold our own." So the Atlantic Charter is a wash-out, and the Cripps mission just what Indians thought it was—a move of expediency in a game of greed and domination. We had, after all, in that month of November 1942, won a victory. What else mattered?

CHAPTER XIV

How ungracious it might seem, how ungracious and misplaced, to write in this strain when the church bells were pealing for victory! Ungracious even to me, the author, for, as an English human being, could I be indifferent to the thrilling idea that the long tide of defeat had turned at last? Why bother about India? Are we not right, after all? Shall we not now build a new world, and will not India, in our own good time, take its place in it? Why rake up old scores?

Yet the bells have an answer. The bells of Christ's churches are commanded by a belligerent Prime Minister to peal for victory: no bell tolls for the lives of young men. The bells ring out the triumph of militarism: they sound no chord of mercy and loving kindness. The clangour of the bells is the clangour of resurrected Empire: not of a resurrected Christ. If one army or another is annihilated in the sands of Libya or on the mud-flats of Tunis, if one influence or another dominates Europe for a moment of history, human nature is not thereby changed. Oppression remains oppression. Are they Church, or Churchill, bells?*

The views put forward in this book are obviously, at the moment, unpopular. Against the background of military expediency, they may well seem ridiculous. The *National Review* for December 1942 records that "Mr Churchill has done two things lately which have been immensely popular"—they are the imprisonment of Gandhi and the Mansion House declaration about the British Empire—the latter "a turning-point in public opinion as well as in the war." That may well be true, or at least seem true to a great many people at the present time. It is natural that, in the swing towards so hard-earned a victory after such long defeat, men's minds should turn gratefully to the continuance of power regained. The Indian problem bristles with seemingly insoluble difficulties, and its solution suggests a losing of face which we are not likely, at a moment of triumph, to welcome. Moreover, we now hear little of India, and to

*"They sounded a knell of warning to Germany and Italy." B.C. News, Nov. 15.

the average man in this country it must seem as if the problem has, for the time being at least, settled itself

But has it? "We have before us a batch of Indian daily papers for the early part of September. Column after column is packed with the news of the revolt and the repression, in dry, brief paragraphs, for nothing but the matter supplied by the semi-official agencies may be printed. On this evidence the activities of Congress are, or in this period were, by an overwhelming proportion non-violent. The offences punished by lathi charges, imprisonments and fines were chiefly the holding of meetings, processions, peaceful picketing, the shouting of slogans and hoisting of flags. For writing slogans in the sand three girls were sentenced to two months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 or another month. Some of the sentences for nominal offences of this kind were even more severe. Given the poverty of Indians the fines were often crippling. As in 1930, women, including students, play a great part in these demonstrations. In one instance the police charged a procession of schoolgirls with canes. Two sentences of flogging were reported. Ten men were sentenced to flogging at Cawnpore for 'assault', which may have meant that they had defended themselves against the police. Two students of Loyola College, Madras, were sentenced to flogging for having stones in their hands which they may have intended to throw at a passing train. Three editors were arrested for publishing news other than that furnished by the semi-official agencies. The outstanding news was the infliction of collective fines, Nazi-fashion, on villages and towns for Congress activities. In every case Muslims were exempted. On one day in villages round Madras these fines totalled Rs. 2,35,000. One little town, Fast Khandesh, was fined Rs. 30,000. The cases of serious violence were not numerous—two or three instances of arson and one of destroying sleepers on the railway. We have reported the punishments for disloyalty. It remains to report the reward of loyalty. The Raja of Kallikote, who wished to travel from Cuttack to Delhi to attend the National Defence Council, had reserved a first-class carriage. Three "European gentlemen" appropriated it and physically prevented him from entering it. The station master was powerless to deal with them. If 'European gentlemen' treat a reigning prince in this way, how do they treat their coolies?"*

Such facts as these are also unpopular, and will not find their way into any save the most progressive columns of the Press. Yet, taken in conjunction with a short announcement appearing in the *Evening Standard* a few days earlier (November 26th) to the effect that "arrests without warrant under the Defence of India Rules can now be made by *all officers and members* of the 'Security corps'," they seem to indicate that British policy in India is not far removed from the very type of oppression against which we claim to fight. And thus we come back to a question propounded in the early part of this book—can a democracy fight against a totalitarian power without itself becoming a totalitarian power in the process? Or, to broaden the question, can the ideas necessarily bred and encouraged by war lead to anything but the will to dominate? And, to expand it still further, is it, perhaps, in the interests of mankind that a strong group should always and inevitably dominate a weaker?

This is the crux of the Indian problem, as it is the crux of all mankind's problems of government, nationalist or imperialist, totalitarian or democratic. The aim of intelligent men and women everywhere must, obviously,

**New Statesman and Nation*, December 5, 1942.

be freedom, both for themselves and for others; a freedom, at any rate, which allows the fullest play consistent with society's safety to the varied tastes and desires and ideals of mankind. Yet, while we sincerely voice that desire for freedom, we are confronted more and more, as the means of regimentation and power-seizing increase, with the violently-opposed necessity of planning and supervising freedom until it becomes a myth. At the point at which we now stand, "planning," although it is a new idea tried with doubtful results by the authoritarian states, seems inevitably the next step. And because poverty and aggression are at the moment man's chief fears, planning is directed chiefly against them. Presumably, then, planning should lead to a world in which the fears of aggression and poverty are banished, and the need for war dismissed. But clearly there is a catch about this: even the very limited security envisaged by the Beveridge report is not possible unless other countries also are planned so as to give England the necessary income to finance the Beveridge scheme. That income must derive from a continuance, or, to use a now favourite word, "expansion" of a volume of British trade which other countries increasingly resent. And therefore even "planning" may lead back to war.

Even the most rabid hater of imperialism must, I think, admit that by and large, and in spite of many mistakes, the British Empire has provided some striking examples of adaptability and goodwill. In spite of wars and troubles, a general tendency towards a comity of free nations, and a general hatred of tyranny, can be discerned. But two points merit consideration. The "comity of nations" has been exclusively of British or near-British stock: South Africa, least British of the Dominions, has been the most restive. The Empire was founded for, and rested upon, trade, with England as the central and essential "shop": other countries have now learnt shopkeeping. As the Dominions become increasingly industrialised and increasingly independent, England, if she is to keep up her high standards of living and even better them, must look more and more towards the expansion of her trade in the great "backward" areas of Africa, India, and—yes, it must be said—China. True, for a little while after the war—a very brief moment in history—reconstruction may absorb the immense output of the factories: after that, if unemployment is not to scatter the planners' dream, Indians and Africans and Chinese must be persuaded to value and pay for the output of the West. Yet it is only a question of time before they, too, if they are successfully led up the path of "more and more," succeed in mastering the industrial tricks, and close their doors with protective tariffs. *L'appetit vient en mangeant*, and man will not necessarily be less greedy when he is encumbered with material possessions from Pole to Pole.*

*"It is a curious tangle that we are in. It is not going to be untangled by shouting or by the approaches of the British Government. Some of you have thought in terms of benevolence towards these countries, but always with that taint of racial superiority. You have considered yourselves, with your inventions of the Machine Age, to be infinitely better than us and that we are a benighted backward people. But the people of Asia do not propose to be treated in that manner any longer. Asia is the mother continent of the world, and India and China constitute the real mother country of the world. What is the good of a people, simply because they have some very great material achievements, when they have forgotten and are not learning the very essence and art of living? They have built and are building better motor-cars. . . . We will also learn to build machines—better machines. But it is China and India, with the experience of ages who have learnt the art of living decently without merely the material achievements of living." (Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at Bombay, August 8, 1942)

It would be absurd to suggest that planning is in itself a bad thing, but it is worth asking ourselves whether planning for purely material ends and aims is not an unsatisfactory, possibly dangerous, answer to the problems of mankind. Planning, at the moment, seems to present us with a world *a la Russe*, in which man obtains a flag and a decoration for turning out an enormous number of bolts, nuts, or screws in his passage between life and death, is liquidated if he does not toe the party line, and is not permitted to live in squalor even if he happens to like doing so. And that, says almost everybody, is very right and proper. *The Times* assures us, on November 18th, 1942, that planning "in the sense of the twentieth century" (whatever that may mean) does not "stand, as some people seem to think, for something mechanised and inhuman." That might indeed be true. Yet the aim of universal more and more, however regimented and planned, remains a hideous aim. Planning, so long as it is selfish in a sectional and national way, is the child of capitalism and greed. Capitalism, naturally, does not much like it, but what father approves his son's ideas? They are of the same stock—the stock of more and more and more. But India is not yet of that stock, though the signs of it are there: in the grim steel city of Jamshedpur, in the huddled bustees of the Calcutta jute-workers, in the dismal tenements of the Bombay mill-slaves, in the smoking chimneys of Ahmedabad, Must the Wigans and the Jarrows and the Rhonda Valleys really be multiplied over the face of India? Many Indians think so, for in a world of grabbing, you must be, it seems, the grabber or the grabbed. Certainly under British or Anglo-American control India must tread the path of industrialisation, and become, as with her resources she can no doubt become, a mighty and greedy exponent of materialism, paying back in due time and in good measure all the insults she has received from what Forster called the "pinkie-greys."

Is that a consummation devoutly to be wished? It must seem to many people an obvious, sensible and easy way. It almost does to me when I write it. Stop all this botheration with Indians, who will quarrel with each other anyway, and guide them with a kind, firm hand into a proper appreciation of the wonders of material prosperity. Advertising on a grand scale all over the Indian countryside will soon cure them of silly and unprofitable notions about simple living, rice dishes, sitting on the floor, having no spring mattresses and so on. They can all be made to want radiograms and sofa-sets and cutlery and tinned food and motor-cars and, of course, guns and aeroplanes and bombs and other adjuncts of civilised life. And then—four hundred millions of them!—boy! what a market! Standards of living in Britain and America will be able to rise like billyho, and standards of living in India will be rising too—so what's against it? Ain't that bringing civilisation to backward peoples? Won't it be just lovely to have the Indian villager buying his electric cooker on the instalment plan?

I suppose that is how it will go. I suppose that is how it must go if India is forced, or chooses, to adapt herself to the materialistic pattern of the West. But I should like to believe in a different destiny for India, a tapestry woven freely by Indian hands from the lovely varied thread of Indian differences and Indian history and Indian thought. I should like to think it possible that India could freely build her own way of life, rejecting the follies which have so manifestly brought Europe to disaster. I should like to see India, not pruned and rootless in the barren soil of

materialism, but firmly rooted in her own ancient traditions, bringing from the past a measure of serenity and dignity to grace the graceless present. And I would hope for an Indian culture widely differing from that of the West, yet friendly to, when equal with, an England which had allowed it to blossom: an Indian culture which might give to the West a wisdom other than the wisdom of expediency and wealth. But to such a road the only gateway is a freedom which does not bargain, a freedom freed from all taint of domination, a freedom unconditional.

It is, perhaps, a very idle dream. The pundits of Westminster, who mean to hold on to their own, are no more likely to make gifts of freedom to India than they were disposed to do to Burma. Yet in this war-battered world strange things may happen. In spite of Mr Churchill's declared intention not to be present at the liquidation of the British Empire, the British Empire, may be gently liquidating itself under his cigar, and the liquidation may not be, as he clearly and sincerely thinks, a humiliation, a loss, a betrayal, but, on the contrary, a change into that real comity of peoples which could be built, not on domination, but on freedom and mutual respect,* without distinction of creed or colour. But a humiliation it will be, and a comity of peoples never, if the atmosphere is poisoned as it is poisoned in India to-day: poisoned by oppression and domination and deadlock, and left to rot.

The most sympathetic reader is now, I know, entitled to say: "You have written all this, and I agree in a general way with your point of view. I don't think it's a happy thing to keep our hold on India when every Indian seems to want us to go, and particularly when we have said so often that we are fighting for freedom, and even drawn up a Charter about it. But suppose that we really were prepared to go the whole hog, to rid ourselves somehow as quickly as possible of our white man's burden in India, how could we go about it? We can't simply vanish into thin air: we can't leave India quite defenceless: and although you don't like 'conditions,' you'll have to agree that *some* steps, *some* process there would have to be? *What?*"

One cannot shirk this question, although it leads to labyrinths of controversy and argument. I am going to answer it briefly and simply. The immediate steps are

1. A declaration that no Viceroy would be appointed after the termination of Lord Linlithgow's appointment in October 1943.

*Cf *The Times*, "Egypt and the Treaty," November 26, 1942. "Rarely can any international undertaking have paid such rich or such speedy dividends as the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. Amidst all the British Government's pre-war errors the handling of the Egyptian question stands out as a shining example of far-sighted diplomacy. *No other political agreement or situation could have worked.* That we have here a country which put all her facilities for the conduct of a war outside her frontiers at our disposal, *and is yet not in actual fact at war herself*, is an advantage of which any tactician will immediately be sensible. *Both countries, and the allied cause in general, are reaping the benefit from a sound stroke of statesmanship.*"

"The East India Company did not win the Gurkha war of long ago. The peace terms were honourable ones, acceptable to both sides. The result is that the Gurkha country remained an independent state and whites may enter it only if they are given permits by the Gurkha authorities. They are firm believers in a saying common in Nepal: 'First the missionary and the Bible: then the trader and the flag: then the soldier and the musket.' So the peace terms said: 'No white men'. They are among the best friends the British have." (*Retreat in the East* O. D. Gallagher)

2 The abolition of the India Office from the same date

3 The raising of the status of the High Commissioner for India to that of Ambassador, who would handle all Indian affairs

These three are the first essential steps. They are essential because the Viceroyal Court and the India Office are the symbols of domination, and their removal, together with a shift of responsibility to Indian hands, is the first vital card to play in the game of winning confidence. It cannot be argued seriously that their removal would affect the war effort in the slightest degree. The India Office has been largely redundant since special legislation for government in India was passed, and we are assured constantly that Government of India decisions are not the decisions of the Viceroy, but unanimous decisions of his Council, which is mainly Indian.

4 The release of political prisoners and the re-establishment of the elected Legislative Assemblies in all Provinces

5 The transfer of power to a Government *either* composed of the eleven elected Prime Ministers of India, *or* formed by an Indian leader such as Sapru, Rajagopalachari, Jinnah, or Nehru.

6 The signature with that Government of a Treaty similar to our Treaty with Egypt, making the necessary arrangements for the control of foreign armed forces in India, and declaring India a free ally

7 The decisive declaration to the Princes that they must make their own terms with the Indian Government

Ten thousand logical arguments may be raised against every point. The point of this book is to suggest that the gift of freedom is an unconditional gift, or no gift at all

Two hundred and sixty years before Christ, the Emperor Asoka caused to be carved among his edicts this statement "Love is won in moral conquests. For this purpose has this religious edict been indited, that my sons and great-grandsons should not think new conquests necessary, that they should relish forbearance and mildness of punishment, and that they should consider only that as a conquest which is a moral conquest." Eighteen hundred years later, when Elizabeth was on the English throne, the Emperor Akbar caused to be written on the great Gate of Victory which still flings up its noble arch from the plain in the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri "Jesus said, on whom be peace, 'This world is a bridge, pass over it, but build no house upon it.'" But the British Arch of Victory, squatting like a disconsolate and embarrassed elephant beside the ruins of the ancient Purana Qila, holds no message for the present or the future. The writing on the wall, if any, is at Wardha or in Whitehall.

CHAPTER XV

To write about political India is to risk disenchantment; more, to invite yawns. To the average Briton, as to me before I went there, India is just tolerable as a picturesque pendant of Empire, a far, a very far-flung jewel of the Crown. When it comes down to statistics and starving villages and Swaraj, it is an immense and confounded bore, best left to politicians. Darlan and Eisenhower and Alexander and the agenda of committees and the nuts and bolts of the factory and R.A.F. raids and Beveridge and how many eggs the hens have laid all bulk larger than do the four hundred rather irritating millions of India

And anyway, in a world of such paradoxes, with a future so veiled in mists, why bother so much about India's "freedom"—whatever that may really mean? I myself find that question difficult enough. Hating nationalism, I hate India's; and I should find it easy—incomparably more easy than writing as I do—to prove quite logically that the British Commonwealth of Nations is the one true foundation of the decent and democratic World State, and that India can find within it a far better future than she is likely to discover in self-strangling struggles towards an "independence" which the shrinking world has already made illusory.

It is easy, too, to dwell on India's divisions and to draw the moral that it is not England's fault if India is not "ready for self-government." On the assumption that India is, and more or less always has been, a land of poverty and squalor and ignorance and general untidiness, incapable of self-defence and continually exploited, it seems that strong British arms and decent British institutions might serve her infinitely better than internecine squabbles and weakening partitions. There are many Indians who, serving the British Raj and depending on it for their livelihood, sincerely believe in it and desire no "freedom" beyond the not despicable share which it gives them. And a third of India is held by Princes who desire the continuation of the Imperial connection and are "loyal" to treaties made with them by Britain, treaties which Britain surely cannot break. How unwise, then, even to contemplate hasty action—the headlong gift of "freedom free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name!"

It is such a good, such a plausible, such a face-saving and comforting argument. It is balm to the cautious and the lazy: it is manna to the vested interests: its reasonableness can be supported by masses of "facts." But its flaw is the flaw to which Christ and Gandhi draw attention and to which democracy cannot turn a blind eye: co-operation is not a matter of force, but of love. Nations and groups, like individuals, must enter freely upon compacts and friendships. Walls built with the mortar of physical force have collapsed again and again throughout history. When, at the Round Table Conference in 1931, Gandhi said "I have aspired—I still aspire—to be a citizen, not in the Empire, but in a Commonwealth. In a partnership if possible—if God wills it an indissoluble partnership—but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another,"—he was saying no more and no less than the Congress, and India, says to-day. And that, as even the Simon Commission could state, is "a great deal more than personal feeling. It is the claim of the East for due recognition of status." It is a claim which we, if we believe, as we say, in freedom, and if we condemn, as we say, aggression, cannot afford to ignore.

India is a subject of violent controversy, and sometimes quite violent mis-statement, among politicians and intellectuals: to the majority of the British public it is non-existent. As I waited one day in the ante-room of a London office, I listened to the conversation of the porter and telephonist, a conversation which revealed with dazzling clarity that neither of them had visualized or could visualize even the war, let alone India. Their immediate personal problems occupied them entirely. There was not a chink or crevice in the mind of either through which the vaguest notion of Indian problems could penetrate. The whole of India could have gone to Japan or perdition for one extra lump of sugar in their tea. Ironically, they would have seen no connection between India and the lump.

But for politicians and intellectuals India is a bone arousing extremes of ferocity and cunning. From Palme-Dutt and Shelvanker to Barton and Schuster and Amery diametrically-opposed facts, as well as views, are vigorously and continually spewed. A distinguished Member of Parliament, reviewing—if the term can be used—three books on India in a distinguished Sunday newspaper,* claims that the first, by a Very High Official, is “most impressive”, while the second, by a Lesser but Very-Long-Term Official is “highly readable.” full of “wide experience”, and “a mine of accurate experience”. After a panegyric of “accuracy”, the distinguished Member pounces on the third unfortunate—Lord Huntingdon—whose book is “devoted to polemics”, has “an indecent argument”, and is “tainted rhetoric”. So we know, at least, where, we are with the distinguished Member. But now, infuriated with Lord Huntingdon and forgetting accuracy, he goes on to say: “The leaders of at least 200,000,000 in India would regard it as a breach of faith and honour on our part to hand their destinies over to an Indian party which they bitterly distrust.”

This is an interesting example, among many such, of the way in which “facts” and “accuracy” can be used to bemuse. Where does he get his 200,000,000? He can get them—and I would not cavil at his sincerity—from the 90,000,000 subjects of the Princes who, supposedly, share the Princes’ “loyalty” to an alien conqueror from the 90,000,000 Muslims who, supposedly—and unfortunately a large number of them are part of the Princes’ subjects—adhere to Jinnah, and, because he does not like Congress adhere also to the British Raj. And from, say, another 20,000,000 Untouchables, just for luck. Result, a suggestion, based on “facts” and “accuracy”, that at least half the population of India, by implication, likes the British Raj. But other “facts” which might well be held no less “accurate” are (a) that there are certainly not more than 2 million Indians, at a generous estimate, who do not “bitterly mistrust” the British Raj, (b) that the Princes are certainly not “leaders”, and that the States Peoples Conference, allied to Congress, represents public opinion in the princely States, (c) that the 90,000,000 Muslims in India are partly in the States, partly in the Congress, and partly non-Jinnah, and (d) that all Indian parties, barring the Princes themselves, are agreed on the central issue of India’s independence. Grey heads of a Sunday in England doubtless nodded over the distinguished Member’s logic—damn logic.

Damn logic, because it leads us nowhere. facts and accuracy are cold comfort, and frequently misleading at that. We all know, though we may see it in a glass darkly, that the problems of the present manquake are not going to be settled by any amount of map-drawing on the part of Churchill or Hitler or Stalin or Roosevelt, or by any economic padded cells devised by Beveridge or Keynes or Morgenthau or Montagu Norman. We are all aware, though it is the most difficult thing in the world to put into words, that something more than these things, something more than material prosperity at each other’s expense, something more than world police forces or bigger and better Leagues of Nations, is needed. And we most of us know, though we rarely face up to it, that it is fantastic nonsense to insist, like dogs barking at the moon, on “employment”,

**Sunday Times*. December 27th, 1942.

when the machine, in the course of a few decades at most, must inevitably steal "employment" from all but a fraction of mankind.

Indians, fortunately for them, have not absorbed the doctrine of the "dignity of labour"—that lousy banner flown by frockcoated slave-drivers to furbish their factories and offices with the ragged millions of the West. The Indian may be forced to work, and to work like a bullock, in order to earn his mite of bread: he does not take it as the aim of life. He is content to enjoy, if he can, not so much the sun as the grateful shade. But the Westerner has not only developed a conscience about sporting with Amaryllis in it—he has become so artificial, and so detached from nature and life, that he really feels lost without his pet invention—"work". Appalling nonsense, and when I read eloquent pleas such as those written by my gifted friend, Mulk Raj Anand, who apparently would have India follow in the industrialized footsteps of the West, I marvel Ivor Brown in the *Observer*, tells a story of condoling with a shopgirl on her long hours "Oh, I don't care," she says "If I wasn't here, I shouldn't know what to do with myself. I can only afford the pictures twice a week." That story is more piercing than any accurate statistics or economic diagnoses. There lies our civilization R.I.P.

Or perhaps not R.I.P. at all. When one reflects what statesmen have said and done, what newspapers have written—and that nevertheless statesmen and newspapers survive, one may perhaps conclude that nothing can change the vast inertia of the obedient unthinking human mass. People have not perhaps the time or inclination or vitality to challenge the accepted order. the cry of "What-can-I-do-about-it?" seems final. Parliament and the British Empire and slums and war remain because they remain—a newspaper fills its columns even if there is no news because a newspaper fills its columns. Newspapers with half-filled columns are as difficult to imagine as going to work in bathing-drawers or shaving the head instead of the chin or, for that matter, not going to work at all. We just can't imagine getting out of ruts which are, after all, purely artificial ruts. And if man can't get out of his rut, then no doubt we must continue the agonizing process of failing to keep our minds level with our mechanical discoveries. Abjuring war with our hearts and spirits, seeing its desolation and destruction and futility, we must yet regard it as the "highest sacrifice" and put into it greater vigour and unity than into any task of peace—wearing away mind and body in the screech and din of factories, we must yet foist more and more fantastically useless "possessions" on all those who do not yet "possess"—having at long last solved the problem of leisure and freed man's spirit from robot toil, we must yet idiotically demand "employment"! And for possessions and employment we must, of course, have domination and war.

Maybe that is man's future, and maybe Burnham's diagnosis is correct. In that case we must arm to the teeth and ever remain so: and everyone else who can will naturally do the same. We must, in sheer self-defence, be the strongest nation on earth: other nations will abide by the same motto. We must think of war as the most glorious and inspiring task of man, the first claim on his attention and his life, the eternal arbiter of his destinies. We must take imperialism and domination in our stride, for they are war's assets. Red in tooth and claw, we must batter our way to prosperity once in every generation, and keep the factories going in the pauses of peace. That, maybe, is how man is made and how—now that he has scientifically accomplished world-wide war—he is most likely to

remain. There is no sense in it, but for quite a lot of people there may be more fun to be got out of it than out of aimless, workless, faithless peace. And in such a world India, certainly, must be shackled to the British chariot.

Is it an exaggerated picture? Not really. but we don't like to face it. Is there any other way? Not, clearly, unless our behaviour is very different from what it has been. It is quite obvious, say what we may, that we shall be ripe for quarrelling—say in a decade or so—with Russia or America as soon as we have settled with Germany and Japan under present conditions all powerful States must inevitably struggle with each other for the trade monopolies which are the corollary of a standard of living higher than ordinary environment and circumstance allow. And in a world full of electric buttons waiting to explode continents, fingers won't be wanting. We all know this, of course but—"what can I do?"

To that question there are, and there must be—that is the whole point—not one answer but many. What we each can do, in the negative sense, is *not* to be regimented, *not* to acquiesce in injustice, *not* to let ourselves be ignorant, *not* to betray our consciences to the employer or the firm or the State, or whatever dictator under whatever guise happens to control our material needs or success. And that in itself is no easy task. Yet without it democracy is meaningless. What we each can do, in a positive sense, must depend upon our *real* beliefs and feelings—not on beliefs and feelings foisted upon us by propaganda or circumstance. For some of us it may indeed be war, and perhaps, domination—all honour to the convinced and happy warrior! But for some, too, it may be a real belief that the meek shall inherit the earth—it may be a real desire to take up the Cross and follow—which does not mean killing other people and proclaiming that you are always right. To thine own self be true: that is the beginning and the end of it. If you do not believe in war and domination, do not lend yourself to them, whatever the prize, whatever the cost. The question "what-can-I-do?" is answerable only by each one of us in the isolation of his own spirit.

This book has been written more in the spirit of "what-can-I-do?" than from the point of view of India's freedom as a separate and isolated subject. I hold no particular brief for Indians. Many of them behaved atrociously to me. India has its full share, like England, of rogues and exploiters and robbers. India is not going to be happy and wonderful, all in a moment, because India is free. England and the nations of Europe have made pretty foul messes of freedom. But Indian freedom just happens to be the crucial test of England's honesty. It is 99 years since Lawrence of Lucknow wrote, in 1844, "we cannot expect to hold India for ever. Let us so conduct ourselves . . . as, when the connexion ceases, it may not do so with convulsions but with mutual esteem and affection, and that England may then have in India a noble ally . . ." O noble words, ringing down the century! Can we not echo them to-day? Can we not echo them more valiantly, more generously, more gloriously than with that weak and petulant grunt from the centre of London's moneybags—"we mean to hold our own."

TAILPIECE

The commentator wiped his brow for the fiftieth time, and glared angrily at the broadcasting official, who was leaning on the parapet,

apparently lost in meditation. Behind them the flat white roofs of the Viceroy's house stretched empty, blindly reflecting the blazing sun, and broken only by the dumpy dome and the line of flex wriggling towards the microphone. The shadow of the dome, cast below them across the forecourt, just touched with its apex the base of the Jaipur column, which threw its own shadow, like a pointing finger, towards the long ribbons of Kingsway, threaded through the vacant eye of the Arch of Victory. Beyond that, and in a very different world, the elegant, protesting ruin of the Purana Qila cut the horizon

"You want me to go on?" said the commentator, on a note of anger. He had come from England, where he was well-known as an authority on India, to attend the Viceregal investiture

"No," said the broadcasting official, after a pause "But you can't afford mistakes like that. You must know that the Qutb Minar isn't an iron pillar."

"I did," said the commentator testily "Of course I did. You fuss me. All this rehearsing. It's hot. I shall be all right—"

"The procession," said the broadcasting official, rudely, "will take at least twelve minutes from the time you see it. You must keep up the patter. I'll do it, if you can't."

The commentator longed to say, "Do it and be damned to you," but, remembering his public, repeated

"I shall be all right. Let me rest a bit."

"I should jot down a few points, if I were you," said the broadcasting official, walking away towards the dome. He was wearing, as he had to, a morning coat and top hat. The temperature was 115 in the shade, and he was anxious. Just inside the dome two Indian engineers were sitting at a temporary control unit. Both were attired in khaki shirts and shorts. The elder, Roy, had a round face like a copper-coloured moon, and sported a wide white belt decorated with yellow arabesques. He rose with the air of a deferential, but dignified butler.

"May one, sir, express the hope that our labours will be crowned with success on this fateful day?"

The broadcasting official, who was used to Roy's effluvia, merely said: "How's that echo?"

"The echo, sir, is now entirely absent."

The broadcasting official picked up some headphones, adjusted them to his ears, and craning over a ledge, looked down through a small window into the great Durbar Hall. There, far below, he could see the empty, crimson-curtained throne, and the rows of waiting notabilities on their rows of chairs, bisected by a crimson carpet. The hum of their chatter came clearly through the headphones.

"Things being all right here, Roy, I'd rather that you were at the station."

"Sir." Roy's face assumed a wooden expression.

"I know you'd rather be here. But I should feel happier if you were there. Iyengar can switch over to the study. If you take a car now, you can just do it."

"Sir." Roy took his way obediently to a hatch concealing a stair. His back was an eloquent protest.

The broadcasting official spoke through a telephone to the Station Director nine miles away in Old Delhi.

"I'm sending Roy down to you."

"No need, sir." The Station Director disliked Roy

"I should feel happier "

"Very well, sir "

The Station Director put down the telephone, and, stepping out into the garden which surrounded the studios, began to pace the brown grass. He was composing a poem on unrequited love, and suspected that the official suspected that he was, which made him all the more determined to concentrate on it. He was irritated, in any case, by all the fuss over the Viceregal investiture. If, now, anyone made the same fuss about Bundu Khan or Hafiz Ali—

His eye focussed suddenly on a *mali* who was elaborately doing nothing with a flower bed, and he barked an abrupt order. The *mali* shuffled over to a well at the further side of the garden, an ugly affair some fifteen feet across, covered in a few years before by order of the Government of India, which had concluded, on the five hundred and fifty-first page of the file devoted to the subject, that mosquitos bred in wells. The Station Director had several times ordered that creepers should be trained, over its blocked and useless mouth, but nothing had been done.

"I absolutely insisted that I should be here in person," said Roy at his elbow.

"All right, all right. We all know you're indispensable."

"Indispensable in time saves nine," said Roy darkly, moving away in the direction of the control room. Just at that moment the commentary began. The voice floated out in the still air.

"Good afternoon everybody, or I suppose I should say good morning to listeners in England. I am standing here on the roof of the Viceroy's House at Delhi, New Delhi I should say—"

Here the broadcasting official held up a piece of paper on which he had scrawled SLOWER. The commentator threw a sharp and irritable glance at it, and continued at the same tempo.

"—while below me the Guard of Honour have just come to attention in front of the steps at which the new Viceroy will shortly descend. I am looking down the great ceremonial approach, a mile and a half in length, known as the King's Way. In the far distance, the very far distance, I can just see the procession, um, the procession, with the um, um, the sun, the sun glinting on the lances of the bodyguard, it's really too far away to see, um, very distinctly yet, but I have a magnificent um, horizon, which is dotted, the plain is dotted, um, with the, aha, lavender blossom of the, um, jacaranda trees and in the distance I can see, um, the great iron pillar of the—"

"Damn!" said the broadcasting official quite loudly, and walked away to the dome. "Iyenger—don't move—I'm going down to the study. You can ring me down there if there's anything amiss. Otherwise, you know the drill—switch over when I give you the signal." He disappeared down the stairway.

The Viceroy had taken the oath and shaken hands with the notabilities. In grey frock coat and high collar, the latter showing signs of exhaustion, he stood for a moment in the small drawing-room with the Vicereine, an elegant figure in white, white ospreys misting her wide-brimmed drooping hat.

"That's over, anyway," said the Viceroy. "Now for the broadcast."

"Did you see the ceilings?"

"Could I help it?"

"Atrocious How could she?"

"What shall we do about it?"

"There's always whitewash"

"I think you are right. I shall give the order."

"The sooner the better," said the Vicereine, settling herself on a sofa under a fan. The Viceroy passed, with measured tread, into the study. The broadcasting official, standing by the desk, gave the official bow for Viceroy, which consisted in driving the chin sharply into the collar.

"All ready?" asked the Viceroy.

"Whenever Your Excellency is"

"Five minutes, then"

The Viceroy seated himself at the desk, and began to arrange his papers. He breathed heavily, and a vein stood out across his forehead like a rope. Fans whirled against the ceiling, outside, in the scorched and empty geometry of the Moghul garden, fountains played. The broadcasting official had the air of an anxious producer contemplating a nervous star on a first night.

Down at the station Mr Sri Prakash, the accountant, was smoking a cigarette on the steps leading to the garden. His black moustache dropped, and he had a dejected air. He was, he felt, rather out of it on this occasion. It was better, perhaps, not to be an accountant in this broadcasting business. Better to be on the programme side. A Station Director, now

The Viceroy personally congratulated Mr. Sri Prakash on his outstanding . But no. To an accountant it would never happen. One was really no better than a menial, thought Mr Sri Prakash, gazing with mournful abstraction at the *mali*, who was standing on top of the well, a trail of creeper in his hand. No better than—Mr Sri Prakash stared, unbelieving. His jaw dropped. His eyes bulged. The *mali*—Mr. Sri Prakash spun on his heel, and rushed violently into the studio.

"In God's name," shouted the Station Director, who was already muddled in the metre of his poem by the Viceroy's voice, issuing from a loudspeaker, "am I a dog, to be treated thus? Are you demented?"

Gasping, Sri Prakash pointed downwards. "Gone!" he spluttered. "Sudden—whoosh—down—right in front of me—quick! Not a moment to be lost! Sir!"

"Gone? Who? What? What are you talking about?" stormed the Station Director, switching off the Viceroy. "Down where, idiot?"

"*Mali*," croaked Sri Prakash. "*Mali*, sir. Down well. Fell. Disappeared. Gone. Not a sound. I, I alone—" he collapsed into a chair. The Station Director ran towards the well. Others were also running. A crowd, as usual, was collected by magic from nowhere. In the top of the well was a small jagged hole, where the ancient covering had given way. No sound issued from the blackness below.

"Ropes!" said the Station Director, knowing that there weren't any. "A ladder somebody!"

"No ropes or ladders available," said a voice beside him. It was the voice of Mukerjee, Rural Programme Assistant, who invariably had brilliantly wrong ideas about everything. "But I get you something," he added.

"Anything," said the Station Director, without thinking. Mukerjee vanished. The Station Director, struck with an idea, ran to his telephone and dialled the fire brigade. A slow voice answered.

"Kindly send ropes and ladders to 111, Ram Singh Road," barked the Station Director, "there's a man down a well."

"What's that?" said the voice

Cursing, the Station Director repeated

"Not a fire?" said the voice.

"You son of a hellhound, I told you—"

"If it's not a fire, you must write to the Municipal Engineer "

"But—"

Mukerjee appeared at the window, holding a long coil of heavy cable.

"Good man," said the Station Director, and, dropping the telephone, he rushed out into the garden again "Double thickness—we'll let one of the peons down—"

The moonlike face of Roy, distorted with rage, burst like a tornado from the control-room.

"Ruined!" he bellowed "Sir, sir, we are ruined! The transmitter is off the air!" Then, as he caught sight of Mukerjee, he gave a yell of anger "Son of a pig! Illegally begotten! What have you done? You have cut the cable!"

The Viceroy, bending earnestly to the microphone, perspiration dripping on to his papers, addressed, in long sentences and the English language, the people of India. His praiseworthy sentiments, piped down the lines to Bombay, and thence by beam across the oceans, reached approving listeners in England. But the Delhi transmitters were silent. That did not make much difference, since such Indians as possessed wireless receivers had tuned in, some time before, to a titillating programme of Hindustani songs, given from the short wave transmitter at Bari.

The *mali*, however, drowned quietly by himself, which, after all, was all that mattered as far as he was concerned.

APPENDIX I

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CONGRESS WORKING
COMMITTEE ON 15th SEPT. 1939.

"The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated Ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

"The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

"The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for Imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempts to use India's resources for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

"Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended, and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective, and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept.

"If the War is to defend the 'status quo,' imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee

are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and Imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

"The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity, and will not pass like other crises or wars, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialistic domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

"The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

"As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and, more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new

world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere

"In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed, as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves

"The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future

"War has broken out in Europe, and the prospect is terrible to contemplate, but war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during the past years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities. Cold blooded massacres and torture to the utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world, and unless checked and ended, will destroy the previous inheritance of the past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes, Fascism and Imperialism, are removed. To that end, the Working Committee is prepared to give its co-operation, but it will be an infinite tragedy, if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of Imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

"The Working Committee wishes to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people, or the Japanese people, or any other people, but they have a deep-rooted quarrel with the systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to the victory of one people over another, or to the dictated peace, but a victory of real democracy for all people in all countries, when the world is freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

"The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world."

APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM THE VICEROY'S STATEMENT

Issued 17th October 1939

"I am convinced myself, if I may say so with the utmost emphasis that having regard to the extent of agreement which, in fact, exists in the constitutional field and on this most difficult and important question of the nature of the arrangements to be made for expediting and facilitating the attainment by India of her full status, there is nothing to be gained by phrases which, widely and generally expressed, contemplate a state of things which is unlikely at the present point of political development to stand the test of practical application, or to result in that unified effort by all parties and all communities in India on the basis of which alone India can hope to go forward as one and to occupy the place to which her history and her destinies entitle her."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Some ideas for reading

HISTORY

- 1 The Oxford History of India Vincent Smith Oxford University Press.
- 2 A History of India Sir George Dunbar Nicholson and Watson, 12/6.
- 3 Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India Thompson and Garratt Macmillan 21/-.
- 4 Glimpes of World History. Jawaharlal Nehru Drummond, 10/6
- 5 India. Minto and Morley, 1905-10 Mary Countess of Minto. Macmillan, 21/-.
6. Pundits and Elephants Lord Lytton Peter Davies, 15/-

There is no really satisfactory history of India. No. 1 gives you all the facts and a headache. No. 2 gives you less of both. No. 3 is a careful and fair-minded British view. No. 4, though not concerned only with Indian history, gives a valuable Indian point of view No. 5 is a very entertaining account of Viceregal life. No. 6 is a revealing account of a Governor's troubles with dyarchy.

PEOPLE

1. A Picture of India. Edwin Haward H.M. Stationery Office, 1/-.
2. Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village Oxford University Press, 12/6.
3. The Industrial Worker in India B. Shiva Rao. Allen and Unwin, 10/6.
4. Leaves from the Jungle. Verrier Elwin. Murray, 9/-.
5. Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story. Allen and Unwin, 7/6.
6. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Mahadev Desai. Allen and Unwin, 3/6.

No. 1 does what its publishers want it to do. No. 2 is a brilliant account of Indian village life by a British official. No. 3 is an excellent study of industrial conditions by an Indian journalist. No. 4 is a highly diverting and personal account of life among primitive tribes. Nos. 5 and 6 explain themselves. Mahadev Desai, who died shortly after the arrests of 1942, was Gandhi's secretary

POLITICS

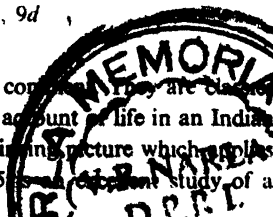
1. Britain and India, 1600-1941 R. Coupland Longmans Green, 6d
2. The Problem of India. K. S. Shelvankar. Penguin Special, 9d
3. India and Democracy Schuster and Wint Macmillan, 12/6
4. Autobiography. Jawaharlal Nehru Lane, 9/6
5. The Unity of India Jawaharlal Nehru Drummond, 12/6
6. Enlist India for Freedom Edward Thompson Gollancz, 2/6

No. 1 is scholarly and professional: a British point of view. No. 2 is a thoroughly Indian point of view, with much information and argument not found elsewhere: banned for export. No. 3 is a careful, readable and sympathetic attempt to survey the problem from the British point of view. Nos. 4 and 5 must be read by anyone who wants to see the Indian point of view. No. 6 is the eloquent plea of an Englishman who understands India

FICTION

1. A Passage to India. E. M. Forster
2. Hindoo Holiday. J. R. Ackerley.
3. Durbar. Dennis Kincaid.
4. Burmese Days. George Orwell
5. Untouchable. Mulk Raj Anand Penguin, 9d
6. Twilight in Delhi. Ahmad Ali

Nos. 1 and 2 are too well known to need comment. They are classics of brilliant observation. No. 3 is an amusing account of life in an Indian State. No. 4, though about Burma, is a convincing picture which applies equally well to everyday life in India. No. 5 is a brilliant study of a little-known subject.



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